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ABSTRACT

Focusing on two isolated rural communities in South Australia which have experienced a sense of isolation for a long time (The South-East and Eyre Peninsula), the paper presents an examination of the pattern of educational needs and interest of residents in isolated rural communities, and their relation to the changing social and educational background. A discussion of the history of the setting, given as background information to current developments, covers the areas' settlement pattern, distance from Adelaide (the capital), and the residents' sense of isolation. Emphasizing rural education, the paper discusses such aspects as the inequality of opportunity for rural children; early school leaving in rural communities; the education of rural parents; the effect of rising educational standards on rural communities; educational and occupational experiences; membership of organisations; shared interests between wives and husbands; adult education activities; reading, radio, and television behaviour; library facilities and their use; the nature and frequency of visits of the residents to the capital; quality of education; teacher mobility; Commonwealth scholarships; retention rates; and political activities. A discussion of the implications of the variations in the education, attitudes, aspirations, and activities of country people for rural society as a whole concludes the paper. (NQA)

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ISOLATION AND EDUCATION:

Educational Aspirations and Achievements in South Australia

R. McL. Harris
J. S. Rooth
J. J. Smolicz

A South Australian Education Department Research Publication

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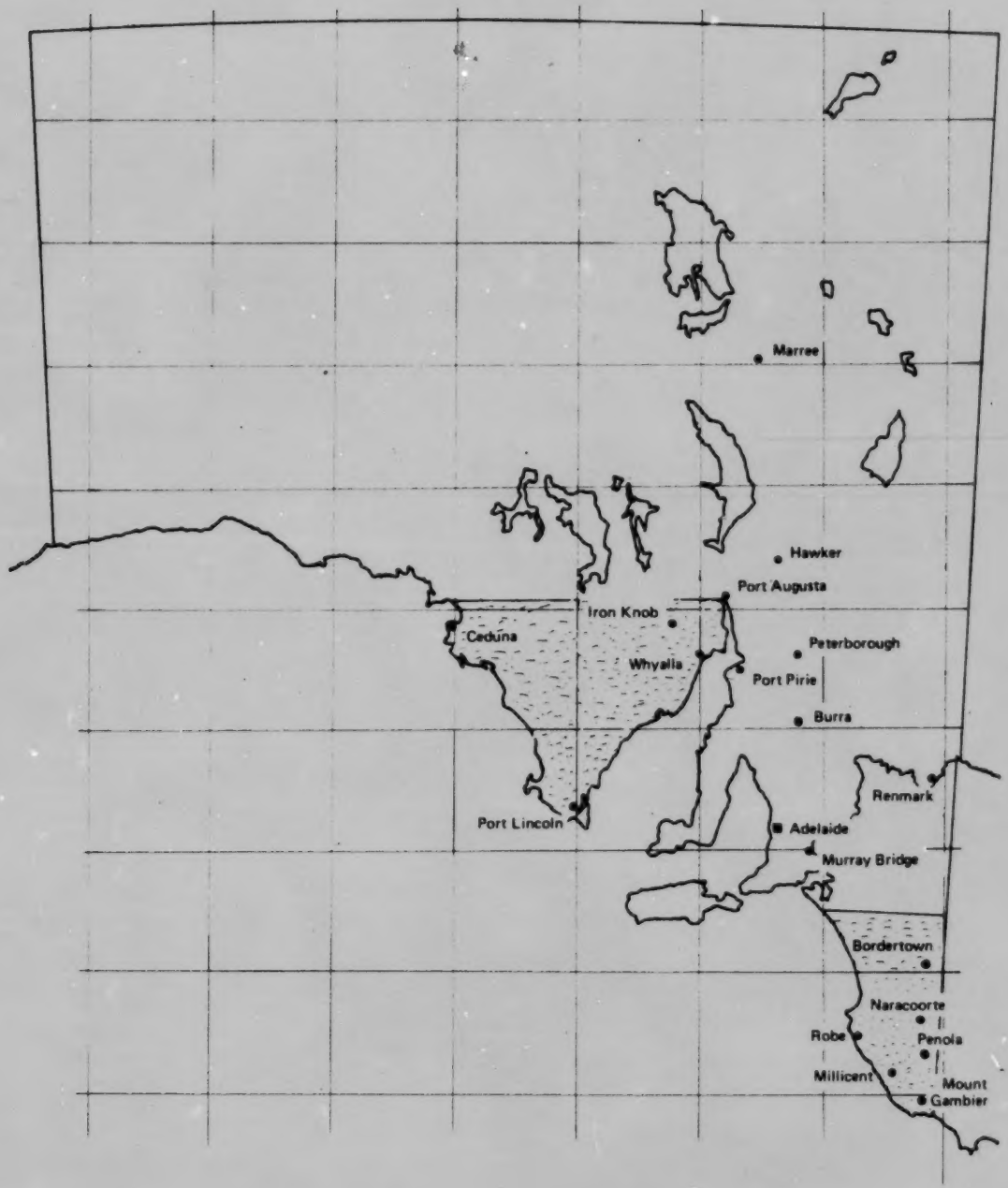
NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

R. McL. Harris, B.A., Dip. Ed. is a tutor in education at the University of Adelaide.

S.J. Rooth, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., was formerly a lecturer in adult education at the University of Adelaide and is now a Director of the Department of University Extension at the University of New England.

J.J. Smolicz, B. Sc., Ph.D., F.R.I.C., is a reader in education at the University of Adelaide.



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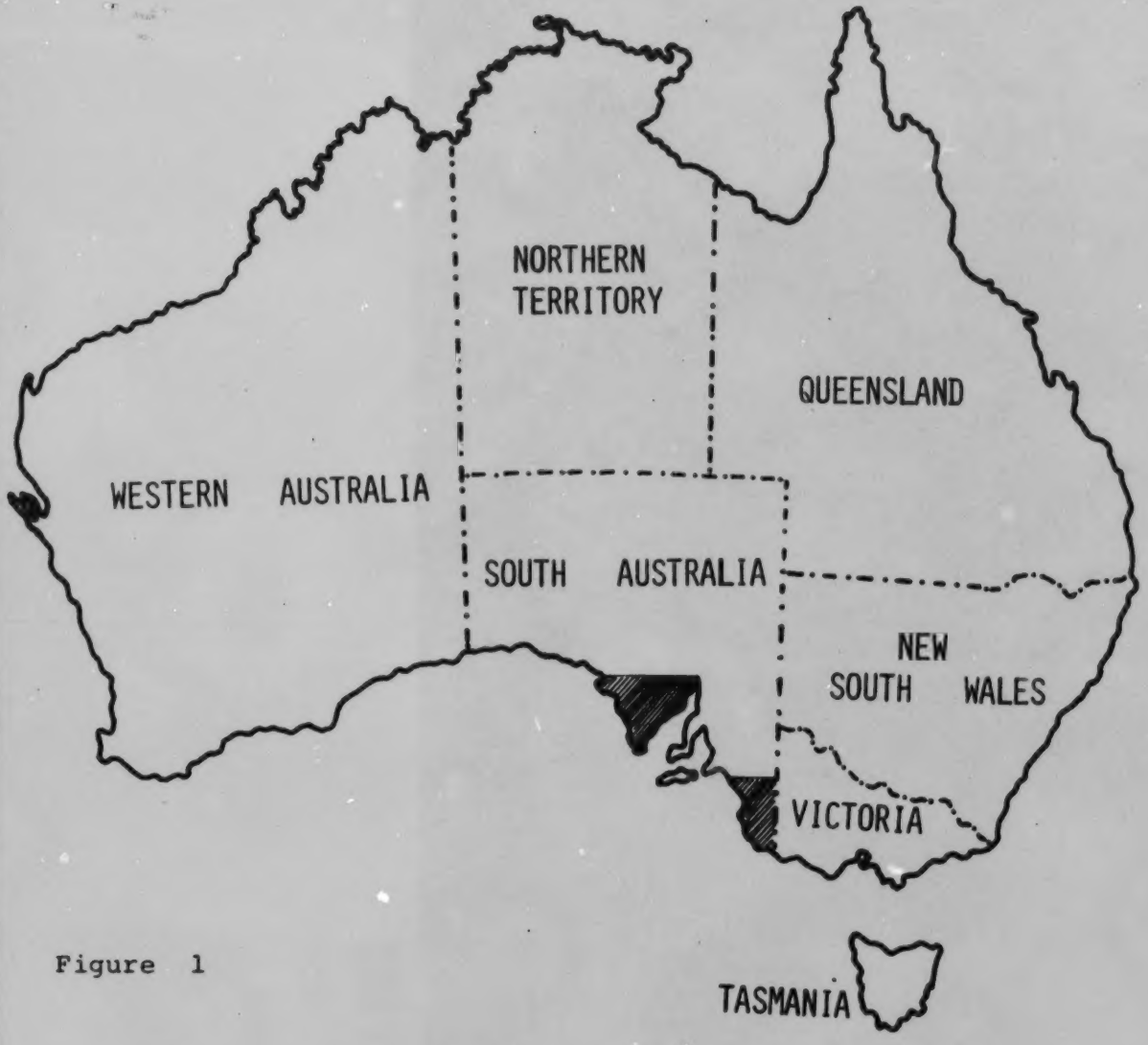
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA
NEW
SOUTH WALES
VICTORIA
TASMANIA

Figure 1

INTRODUCTION

Isolation has always been a dominating theme in Australian history. Australia is such a vast continent that it is not surprising that distance has played an important role in Australia's exploration and settlement. But while the opening up of new stretches of country and the exploits of individual pioneering families in the bush have become legend, the development of actual communities in these isolated areas has tended to be only lightly skimmed over by historians. Only now and very gradually are the local pieces of the national jigsaw puzzle being laid, and it may be contended that until the groundwork has been constituted in the writing of local history and sociology, no full or accurate account can be successfully compiled on a nationwide scale. This paper has thus been written in the belief that although hypotheses of a general kind are indeed invaluable, they must be supplemented and reinforced by local data.

When compared to the countries with large agricultural populations such as the Soviet Union and the developing states of Asia and Africa, there has been relatively little written in Australia on cultural and educational aspirations and achievements in relation to the location and mode of living of rural communities. Rather, the study of inequalities in education in relation to the class and ethnic subcultures among *urban* children is in vogue among educational sociologists. And yet equivalent studies on rural communities, particularly in Australia, deserve far more attention than they have received in the past. We certainly have no justification for believing this on the grounds that the Australian situation is unique. On the contrary, many of the trends which we would now observe in Australia are repetitious, only more recent, of those that

OVERSEAS TRENDS

have already taken place or are taking place in other Western countries. The wastage of potential talent in untapped rural areas, for example, is the principal worry in Russia, where the best schools are almost invariably located in the large towns. Following the period since 1917 of tremendous increases in provision for education in purely numerical terms the more recent demands for quality are beginning to impose strains on the principle of equality of opportunity. Although the Soviet population is about equally distributed between town and country, it is the children living in the towns who are educationally more ambitious and who are more successful in obtaining places in institutions of tertiary education. A study carried out in 1963 by V.N. Shubkin discovered that while 76% of students of peasant origin wished to continue their studies after completing secondary school, only 10% actually did so. (In contrast the corresponding figures for students from families of the urban intelligentsia were 93 and 82 per cent.)[1]

Nor is the drain to the cities of the most able youth unique to Australia. The rising generation in rural Russia, because it regards agriculture as the lowest of occupations,

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[1] Compare the corresponding figures for students from other occupational groupings: workers in industry and construction, 83% wished to continue studying (61% actually did so); workers in service industries, 76%, (59%); rural intelligentsia, 76%, (58%); and workers in transport and communications, 82%, (45%). See M. Matthews, "Class Bias in Russian Education", New Society, 19 December, 1968, pp. 911-913. Also G. Fischer (Ed.), Science and Ideology in Society (New York, 1967), pp. 24-27.

longs to transfer to the cities: in one survey of rural school leavers only eight per cent did not want to move to urban areas.[2] The outflow mobility of rural youth has probably been most marked in Hungary where before the war there had been a very high proportion of rural population. Rapid political, economic and social changes over post-war decades have led to one of the most massive internal migrations with the exodus of sons whose fathers were in agricultural occupations, away from the land into non-agricultural manual (50.5%) and non-manual (8.5%) occupations.[3]

For the individual, no matter in what country, mobility between rural and urban environments is not a painless process. Since there are significant differences between the two types of living, the tensions experienced in such a transfer are difficult to overcome within a lifetime. The attitudes, dispositions and behavioural patterns formed early in the initial environment can be changed only very gradually. In every country, too, the siphoning of the most able and the most active elements from the rural community as a totality upsets the equilibrium of that community. What maintains the relative stability of communities on the continent of Europe is a powerful tradition of communal life centred around small villages in close proximity to each other.[4]

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[2] J.J. Smolicz, "Economics, Ideology and Social Scientific Research", South Australian Education, no. 4 (1969), pp. 21-28.

[3] Zsuzsa Ferge, "Social Mobility and the Open Character of Society", The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. 11, no. 37, (1970), p. 85.

[4] In his study of immigrants in the Latrobe Valley, for example, Zubrzycki discovered that homesickness, irrespective of the ethnic origin of the immigrants, was often expressed in the form of a longing for the social life of the close rural and urban communities in Europe. See J. Zubrzycki, Settlers of the Latrobe Valley (Australian National University, Canberra, 1964), p. 159.

THE AUSTRALIAN CASE

Where Australia differs from environments elsewhere, however, is in the lack of small settlements close together and a tradition of local government. The migration of the more enterprising and academically able from Australian rural areas, with only minimal replenishment from a small source of itinerant professionals and semi-professionals, can, therefore, be regarded as a form of blood letting resulting in a social anaemia which makes closeknit community feeling and participation extremely difficult. In the educational sphere, for example, Partridge sees as the most dominant characteristic the fact that the great majority of Australians have been perfectly content to accept the organization and control of all schooling by large, complex, highly centralised government departments of education.[5] Until very recently, there has been very little public interest in education *per se; local* rural communities have not shown much inclination to claim for themselves any significant role in shaping the development of the schools, or in keeping themselves informed about day-to-day affairs or conduct of the schools. Many Australians, as well as a number of overseas visitors[6], have written about the lack of community interest and activity in Australia as a whole but such criticisms apply with special force to the rural parts of the country. It is, however, merely one aspect of a general feature of Australian communities to look to governments to supply all social facilities and services, and to rely upon what these governments have been prepared to provide.

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[5] P.H. Partridge, "The Direction and Goals of Australian Society", in F.M. Katz and R.K. Browne (Eds), Sociology of Education (Melbourne 1970). pp. 68-82. He makes the interesting point that a large proportion of the developments in educational ideas and policies in Australia are connected with the names of officials and officially appointed committees, not great educational thinkers as, for example, in America.

[6] For example, R. Freeman Butts, Assumptions Underlying Australian Education, (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1955).

EDUCATIONAL STUDIES ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

In his introduction to Radford's educational and cultural study (1939) on the Bairnsdale region of Victoria, K.S. Cunningham wrote:-

> "One can well imagine how much more intelligently education could be administered if for any given school system surveys of a somewhat similar character, though not necessarily so intensive, could be made at a number of typical points."[7]

Radford analysed very thoroughly the cultural and educational life of the Eastern Victorian Community in an attempt to pinpoint whether the schools *were* actually catering for the needs of that particular community. He revealed a dearth of certain amenities of social and cultural life, and a rather serious disjunction between vocational requirements and educational means; in his view, however, the Bairnsdale region was not greatly handicapped by the sense of isolation felt in many other areas. Unfortunately his pioneering work has been insufficiently followed up by social scientists. The only other important research of this kind has been that carried out in the opposite corner of Victoria. Fifteen years after Radford's book was published, Oeser and Emery's comprehensive survey in the Mallee district analysed the part played by the environment and the school in the socialisation of the country-town and farm child.[8] Their work, in relating sociological and psychological aspects of life in a small community, provided another much-needed contribution to the study of the rural child in an isolated Australian district.

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[7] W.C. Radford, The Educational Needs of a Rural Community (Educational Research Series, No. 56, Melbourne University Press, 1939), p. 6.

[8] O.A. Oeser and F.E. Emery, Social Structure and Personality in a Rural Community (London, 1954).

THIS STUDY

What we have put forward in this paper is a further, though less intensive, study which focuses its attention on another two similarly-separated "typical points", points moreover which *have* experienced a sense of isolation for a long time. Our "typical points" are two isolated rural communities in South Australia - The South-East and Eyre Peninsula. In terms of distance from other major centres of population, size of population, and extent of provisions in the cultural and social spheres of life, they are similar; yet geographically they are located in very different areas. They can therefore be regarded as appropriate crucibles for this study.

In our view, however, in order to study an educational theme in its proper perspective, the history of the setting must be given as background information to current developments. Section two, therefore, presents the historical background against which later **sections** are to be focused. We are concerned with rural education in Australia as a whole and, although we posit special emphasis on South Australia and the two regions indicated, we do not restrict our discussion solely to these areas. The picture which emerges is likely to be more representative of conditions in other remote rural districts in Australia than any generalising or theorising from overseas findings.

Neither do we limit ourselves to the education of rural schoolchildren. As the title of this paper implies, we are considering rural education in general. Our Eyre Peninsula study involved an examination of the pattern of educational needs and interests of married women in an isolated rural community, and their relation to the changing social and educational background. The survey investigated such aspects as, educational and occupational experiences; membership of organizations; shared interests between wives and husbands; adult education activities; reading, radio and television

behaviour; library facilities and their use; and the nature and frequency of visits of the members of the sample to Adelaide.[9]

In elucidation of problems of rural areas, personal experience alone is likely to lead to excessive generalization. Our attempt in this paper, therefore, is to relate our empirical findings to our own personal experiences and those of others and to place the results in perspective by presenting them within their broader social, cultural and educational setting.

All too often a snippet concerned with some rural aspect is dragged headlong as evidence into historical or educational argument and receives but scant and casual treatment. Yet the fact that Australia is the most urbanised nation in the world in proportion to its population[10] is no cause for neglect or disinterest in rural communities.

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[9] The sample comprised 258 married women in Eyre Peninsula who, in age range and marital status, were taken to be representative of the total group of married women in the Peninsula as indicated by the 1965 Census returns. For further details, see S.J. Rooth, "A Study of the Educational Needs and Interests of Married Women in the Rural Areas of Eyre Peninsula with Reference to their Social and Educational Backgrounds", unpublished M.Ed. thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1970.

[10] The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development survey showed that at the end of 1970, 88.5% of Australia's population was living in cities. Corresponding percentages for other countries were Japan 84.4%; Germany 82.4%; Denmark and the United Kingdom, 80.1%; the United States, 75.2%. The Australian, 26th October, 1971.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

In terms of primary industry, population density and distance from Adelaide, Eyre Peninsula and the South-East of South Australia can be classified as typical rural regions. They lie at either extreme of the State, severed geographically by Spencer Gulf and the Coonalpyn Downs (until recently the "Ninety-Mile Desert") respectively from the remainder of their parent-State, and by official boundaries from their neighbouring States of Western Australia and Victoria. The order in which land in the colony was opened up was chiefly one of decreasing rainfall, so that when all the land in the central counties had been occupied, the movement of population was towards the South-East in the eighteen forties and westward towards Eyre Peninsula in the eighteen sixties. Both regions were settled mainly by pastoralists in search of natural open grassland plains. As a result of the westward expansion of pastoral settlement, the South-East was in fact first opened by squatters from the Port Phillip side of the border.[11] In both districts, initial settlement was in the South around Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln. The first crossing of the "Ninety-Mile Desert" in 1846 by Seymour and Rhodes led to the rapid extension of runs from Naracoorte and Mosquito Plains to Bordertown and Keith.[12] It was in the final thirty

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[11] This to a very large extent explains the Victorian sympathies and ties of South-Eastern people that can still be detected today. See R. McL. Harris, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind", unpublished B.A. (Hons.) thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1969.

[12] S.A. Government Gazette, February, November 1845; April, June, September, 1846; January, April, 1847.

years of the last century that settlers spread northwards in Eyre Peninsula, the pattern of settlement as in the South-East following closely the coastal margins before extending further inland. By 1921, several farmers had established themselves in the lower central districts of the Peninsula. With the introduction of superphosphates early in the twentieth century and the construction of the Tod pipeline between Port Lincoln and Ceduna between 1926 and 1929, development on the peninsula was considerably accelerated.

In both areas the trend after the second World War has been towards larger holdings, although size of farms varies according to their nature and situation. The reduction of the total number of properties has been as high as fifty per cent in some areas on the Peninsula, although total acreage given to agriculture has increased considerably.[13] Most schemes in the South-East attempting to legislate for closer settlement proved largely unsuccessful, though the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act of 1945 in emphasizing land development rather than land settlement did achieve a fair measure of success both directly and through the example set to private landholders.[14] On the whole, however, increasing costs are forcing smaller properties to shelter beneath the umbrellas of larger holdings.

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[13] W.A. Michelmore, "Agriculture in South Australia: Upper Eyre Peninsula", S.A. Journal of Agriculture, Volume 69, No. 5 (October 1965), pp. 80-95.

[14] See Closer Settlement Bill, Act No. 688, 1897; J. Marsden, "Closer Settlement in the South-East, 1897-1915", unpublished B.A. (Hons.) thesis, University of Adelaide 1964; Acts on closer settlement and soldier settlement each year between 1917 and 1923; Land Settlement Act No. 37, 1944; and War Service Land Settlement Agreement, Act No. 33, 1945.

DISTANCE FROM ADELAIDE

In addition to resemblance in settlement pattern, these two districts share another characteristic: distance from the capital. This has led to a whole set of problems - political, economic, legal, social and psychological - which are common to all isolated Australian communities. It is true that new transport and communication facilities are now opening up the more remote areas. The opening of direct railway links[15] represented a turning point of major importance in the breakdown of isolation of these two areas. Sealed highways and regular air services have also reduced markedly the communication time with the capital, while extension of existing hotel facilities in addition to the construction of many new motels is indicative of the rise in the number of tourists to both regions.

A SENSE OF ISOLATION

Yet Eyre Peninsula and the South East are still far enough off the beaten track to have suffered as a result of their isolated position. Some projects are still out of range of television transmitters for example, while the provision of community arts services and of other cultural facilities from outside the local regions is generally too uneconomical to be considered by any organization without the aid of governmental subsidies. Both districts in fact have a long history of a feeling of isolation and neglect by the government in Adelaide. The cries from the South East, for example, in the latter eighteen sixties[16] were for an Agricultural College to be erected at Mount Gambier, although nothing was done. In all probability, the government considered such an institution would be too distant from the

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[15] Narrow gauge between Adelaide and Mount Gambier in 1887; extension of the broad gauge from Wolseley to Mount Gambier in 1953; and railway from Port Lincoln to Ceduna and Penong in 1915. See The South Australian Register, 17 June, 1887; Border Watch, 24 June, 1953.

[16] See the Border Watch, 30 May, 1886 and 27 February, 1867.

remainder of the colony, and too close to the border, so that it would benefit other states more than South Australia. The fact that one was established not long after (1883) at Roseworthy, only 33 miles north of Adelaide, lends evidence for this view. Complaints were made about the lack of inspection of schools in the area. By 1867, Mount Gambier had been visited only twice since schools opened there, and between 1358-1866, Penola only once. Others had not been inspected at all. It was felt that the two dozen schools in the South-East, although they may not give full employment to a permanent Inspector of Schools, warranted at least four visits a year. Some provision for higher education was also felt to be urgently required.

One hundred years later, the main issue at a South-East Educational Seminar was for the establishment of a Teachers College at Mount Gambier. The arguments raised for such a move were centred around the availability of essential service facilities, the rather large hinterland it would serve, the need to meet teaching needs from within the district itself, the problems of accommodation, transport and distance from Adelaide, parents' willingness to use local educational institutions (evidenced when Leaving, and later, Matriculation classes were introduced) and the impoverishment of the local community by the drain of students and families to the city. Perhaps the most interesting reason was that parallel tertiary institutions already existed across the border at Warrnambool, Ballarat, Bendigo and in N.S.W. at Armidale. The result from the local point of view was:

> "a potential braindrain to Victoria which we can ill afford. We must at best compete with Warrnambool, or at worst, complement its courses, before we are out of the race altogether."[17]

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[17] The South Australian Teachers' Journal, 28th April, 1971.

Again, the history of these areas indicates that effective and rapid communication, although recognized as an essential prerequisite for the progress of any area, was for many years totally inadequate for the demands of balanced development, despite the fact that the effectiveness of government has been found to increase as any isolation of districts created by distance is removed.[18] Almost every letter to the Adelaide press from South-Eastern correspondents contained graphic descriptions of the hardships encountered in travelling in the district. The bush claimed many victims. The mail from outside the district often arrived late because the rider had lost his way in swamps at night, or his pack horse had dropped dead, while the Postmaster at Kingston resigned in 1861 because his job entailed too much trouble without any remuneration.[19] Communication with the capital in 1861 took five days, and with Melbourne, four and a half; by 1866, Adelaide was still four and a half days distant, while Melbourne was only two and a half. Adelaide in fact could be reached more quickly by going via Melbourne from Mt. Gambier or Penola, unless one rode or drove one's own horses.[20] The Border Watch regretted that it could seldom devote much space to Adelaide news because it was stale by the time it arrived![21]

Many times in their history, therefore, the sense of isolation of the residents of these distant regions was

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18 L.A. Schumer, The Elements of Transport (London, 1955), pp. 1-6.

19 The South Australian Register, 17 May, 1861.

20 South Australian Parliamentary Paper, No. 65, 1866-7, p. 8

21 "A four and a half days' trip through the desert has a wonderfully sedative effect upon the waves of colonial politics." Border Watch, April 15, 1864.

transformed into a sense of injury and in turn, this bred discontent with the remote capital and government. This could vent itself in a number of ways, positively and negatively, which included vocal complaints, pamphlets, memorials, petitions, greater and more effective political representation, deputations, policies of self-help, even threats of secession.[22] In all of these, the local press played an important role:

> It is but too likely that if we are apathetic and silent we shall be treated with neglect. As a general rule in colonial legislation, those who make the greatest cry are the best attended to; while those who neglect to cry are themselves neglected. Let us then make ourselves heard.[23]

It can be contended, however, that their isolation was an advantage in that it left the communities to a great extent more free to develop along their own lines. Forced to rely upon themselves, these isolated communities developed a *modus vivendi* of their own independent of the influence of the metropolis. At first, people on their stations and farms by necessity centred their whole lives about their own homesteads, led quiet lives, and grew just enough produce for their own needs, the consequence in most areas of having no readily available outlet for surplus produce. Though for the most part there was considerable co-operation between neighbours, no feeling of community prevailed over the regions until centres were established in the separate townships where residents and their children could assemble as a whole for the purposes of schooling, worship and

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[22] For examples, see the South Australian Advertiser, 12 August, 1861; South Australian Register, 14 December, 1861; 28 March, 5 and 11 April, 1862; Border Watch 3 January, 1862; Portland Guardian, 23 January, 1862.

[23] Border Watch, 1 April, 1865.

entertainment. Gradually these centres did form in response to local need and demand, though community corporateness has remained rather weak[24] in comparison with other countries. Paradoxically, while these rural communities persistently cried for more governmental attention, at the same time they were deeply suspicious and distrustful of any concessions that were granted to them. The Border Watch voiced the sentiment of the South-Eastern district when it proclaimed,

> Knowing the weakness of Government for centralisation, it becomes us to be very watchful over our concessions and to spare no effort to hold our own.[25]

This can be witnessed in the South East during the eighteen sixties with such matters as railway proposals, road grants, branches of government offices, Circuit Courts and local land sales. Both of the latter two were tried, suspended shortly afterwards and granted again.[26] But the district was continually suspicious that the government would upset them.

> If the Government is to give and take our privileges as they have done ..., we may well ask what better is our position than that of the subjects of the Czar of Russia or the Sublime Porte, for these tyrant potentates would hardly dare to trample on the rights of their subjects in a more arbitrary manner than the responsible Government of Adelaide does on those of the inhabitants of the South-East district.[27]

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[24] One instance may be cited: when the District of Victoria in 1866 asked for an Institute, the Commisioner of Crown Lands expressed his opinion that there was too much disposition to lean upon Government in such matters and too little disposition to rely upon private effort. South Australian Parliamentary Debates, 1866, c. 461.

[25] Border Watch, 9 November, 1867.

[26] For Circuit Courts, Border Watch, 2 February, 1862; 24 April, 1863; 27 May, 1864; 2 February, 1867; Register, 24 February, 1862. For Local Land Sales, Border Watch, 11 March, 1865, 10 February, 1866; 27 May, 1868.

[27] Border Watch, 6 May, 1864.

Thus the little that was voted to the district was often received rather as a gift of a Legislature it had no confidence in and had every reason to distrust. This unconcealed animosity towards the government no doubt created a prejudice which militated against their more equitable claims.

Even today the feeling of isolation, if not so much a sense of neglect, prevails in the South-East - to the majority of those born in the district, "town" refers to Melbourne not Adelaide, and "the Bay" to Port MacDonnell not Glenelg. With quicker modes of communication - broad gauge railway, air services and motor transport - and with television and radio, the feeling of isolation does not breed so easily and naturally a sense of neglect and injustice as it did in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Yet although it is possible to break down the physical remoteness of a district and remedy its neglect, the feeling of isolation can never be completely eradicated.

INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL CHILDREN.

STATIC NATURE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

The relative geographical immobility of people within remote country communities is of particular relevance in this study. Although this is an age of rapid economic and social change, the majority of residents in these areas are well-settled and are likely to remain there for the greater part of their lives. Our sample of women in Eyre Peninsula revealed that most had resided in their present home for at least ten years and more than fifty per cent had lived there for more than twenty years.[28] Those who had experienced continuous rural residence for the greater part of their lives totalled over eighty per cent of the sample group. To some extent, this may indicate a desire on the part of the women to live in the country, though it may also indicate other factors, not the least of these being the inability or unwillingness of husbands to change their pattern of residence. Whatever the reason, the population appears virtually unchanging, with a restriction on the importation of new ideas and opinions by newcomers to the

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[28] These figures are in strong contrast to those given by Bogne for the American scene. Bogne points out that every year about five to seven per cent of Americans move from one country to another in the process of changing their residence. Not more than two or three per cent of the adult population has spent its entire life in one house or apartment, and probably not more than ten to fifteen per cent live their entire lives within the same county. D.J. Bogne, The Population of the United States. Glencoe, Ill., 1959 . p. 375.

region. The static nature of rural communities suggests rather united societies, and also offers a part explanation for the traditional conservatism usually associated with them.

EFFECT ON INFORMAL EDUCATION

The education, therefore, which rural children in these communities receive is strongly influenced, and possibly even inhibited, by the inherited traditions and social patterns within the local communities themselves. The psychology of these children tends to be very largely the psychology of their parents. Where there is little opportunity for contrariant ideas to enrich those already present, the influence of parents' personalities becomes vitally significant, an influence so very subtle that it frequently goes undetected by both parents and children. The latter, after years under the same influences, naturally take on the habits, outlook, sentiments and beliefs of their parents. It is unfortunate, however, that it is in isolated communities where narrowness of mind and culture is most likely to be found that such inter-generation transmission channels are so firmly ingrained; it is in this way that the deprivations as well as the defects they give rise to, tend to be perpetuated, even accentuated. It is, therefore, through formal education that the rural child must be presented with that which he so regrettably lacks: extended experience and social opportunity.

UNEQUAL EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

But that is not the end of the problem. From an identification of the *need* for formal education for the rural child and an appreciation of its importance, the next question is to ask what is in fact being done. We find that equality of opportunity for every child whatever his geographical locality is simply a myth as far as the rural child is concerned. Studies have consistently demonstrated that children in the country have considerably less education than city and even country-town dwellers. The possible reasons for this

are manifold. Although centralisation in theory ensures equal educational provision throughout each of the Australian States, it is in the subsidised extras such as swimming pools, libraries, playing-fields, halls, gymnasia (in some cases even septic tank systems[29]) for which parents are required to raise money locally, that country students have received a smaller share of public funds than city children.[30]

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[29] An article entitled "Pan or Pit Latrines at Country Schools" continues to be printed annually in the Education Gazette (S.A.). It counsels teachers at country schools on methods of keeping pan or pit systems flyproof, clean and hygienic, for "however well-built and well-kept they may be, offensive odours can still be a problem. Earth, ashes or 'disinfectant' powders can be a help. A cheap and effective method much used by the services in the tropics during the war was to coat the surface of the matter with used sump oil ... Minimum amounts are a dessertspoonful for a pan and a cupful or a cigarette-tinful for a pit ... One precaution is necessary - dropping matches or lit paper may cause a fire. Children should be warned of this and notices should perhaps be posted".

[30] Letters from teachers and students in the country are frequently published in metropolitan newspapers complaining about the lack of facilities and equipment in country schools and the apparent governmental apathy towards them. For an example, see The South Australian Advertiser, 8th May and 8th October, 1971. See also Education in South Australia: Report of the Enquiry into Education in South Australia, 1969-1970. pp. 217-218. Hereinafter cited as the Karmel Report. In South Australia, the unfairness of the subsidy system has eventually been recognised, and it is to be replaced by a new system of *direct* annual grants to schools for equipment, teaching aids and other items. Schools will now be able to budget on a reliable estimate of income. The grants system is claimed to be another significant step towards the decentralisation of the education system. The Advertiser, 29 October, 1971.

There is also a dearth in country areas of preschool centres. In view of Bloom's findings[31] the vital importance of such centres can no longer be underestimated. With present arrangements whereby government provides subsidies for maintenance of preschools but capital funds have to be found by parents, is it any wonder that these centres continue to cluster only in the more wealthy sectors of the cities? It is those most in need of nurseries and preschools who are not receiving them. Mobile kindergartens are a possible means of providing some of the advantages of kindergartens for rural children. The conditions of training of preschool teachers discourage the provision of specially trained teachers in areas remote from the capital. The limited number of living allowances available to trainees and the absence of boarding allowances favour students who can live at home during training. Despite the fact that kindergarten teachers can choose where they wish to teach, in contrast to other teachers who may be posted by the Education Department to country areas, country participation rates in pre-schooling in South Australia almost approximate those of Adelaide.[32] Preschool centres in the country, however, function predominantly in the larger towns, and it appears that the less populated areas, with the interest that is reflected in such a response from the larger towns, could well do with more of them.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Moreover, centralisation is certainly no guarantee of the *quality* of education provided. Schools in the country are necessarily smaller than those in the city. One consequence is that libraries in those schools with relatively

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[31] The psychological research of Bloom purports to show that where changes in development of intelligence take place, fifty per cent of such changes occur before the age of 4½ years, thirty per cent between 4½ and 8, and only twenty per cent between 8 and 18 years.

[32] Karmel Report, pp. 258 and 260.

few senior students are invariably very limited, and there is not the benefit of a fine municipal library close at hand that is available for city students. Secondly, although smaller classes can mean *prima facie* more individual attention, more often than not small senior forms fall below the optimum size for stimulating group discussion and interaction. Country students therefore often do not come into contact with tutorial type group arrangements and the opportunity they present for speaking freely and openly, and remain at a disadvantage in the ability to express themselves compared with city students. From a survey of Teachers College students in Sydney, Gunn concluded that males who had attended city schools had a definite advantage over those who had attended country schools in both accent (9% to 2% had an "educated" accent) and speech skill (54% to 38% had "superior" speech skill). When home situation was investigated, females from isolated areas had a decided disadvantage in both accent and speech skill. In the "educated" accent classification they had 11% compared with 28% for the rest of the country and 32% for the city, and in "superior" speech skill rating they had 54% compared with 71% and 64%.[33]

Thus what happens in the school reinforces what the staff of one school called "a rural tradition of slovenly speech" which has "wide ramifications in vocabulary and in written expression".[34] Lack of verbal fluency, characteristic of many children from remote areas and areas of low population density, is definitely a handicap to academic

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[33] J. Gunn, "The Influence of Background on Speech of Teachers College Students", Forum of Education, Vol. 22 No. 1 (March, 1963). pp. 18-41.

[34] Quoted in J.A. Fyfield, "Rural-Metropolitan Aspects" in P.J. Fensham, Rights and Inequality in Australian Education (Melbourne, 1970), p. 101.

achievement in the current educational system which is deeply linguistically oriented.[35] And thirdly, country schools obviously have a narrower and more constricting range of subjects in their curriculum because of their size which makes the offering of certain subjects, for example, languages, or physics and chemistry as separate studies, uneconomical. It is also risky, since there can be no assurance that among the small numbers of staff at any given country school there will be teachers to continue from year to year certain subjects, particularly languages, introduced by their predecessors.

In the rural areas of South Australia during the late thirties, the courses offered in primary schools varied according to the number of teachers employed in individual schools. Area schools accommodated both primary and secondary grades, yet the list of subjects offered varied little from 1938 to the present day.[36] The opening of a few technical schools saw the introduction of some commerce and science courses, but only those living in the near vicinity of such institutions would have been able to take advantage of this opportunity. There is not in rural areas any choice of school so this does not offer a solution to the problem. Parents in the city, at least before the

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[35] It is also a characteristic of the "culturally disadvantaged" child who is more at home with "public language". See B. Bernstein, "A Public Language", British Journal of Sociology, December, 1959, pp. 311-323 and F. Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York 1962), passim.

[36] See South Australian Education Department, "Courses of Instruction for Primary Schools, Revised 1938"; "Courses of Instruction for Primary Schools" for 1944-1958; "Syllabus of Subjects and Courses of Instruction". (E. Mander-Jones).

advent of zoning, were able to select which particular school, and its nature (High, Technical, Private), they wished their child to attend.[37]

THE SMALL RURAL SCHOOL

In Australia, demo-graphical factors have naturally called for educational institutions capable of being maintained at low costs, designed for relatively small numbers of children and situated within reasonable distance of the children's homes. The extreme answer was the one-teacher school which more or less inevitably trailed in the wake of pastoralists and agriculturalists as they dispersed throughout the hinterland. In 1940, no less than 74% of the primary schools in South Australia were of this type. By 1969, there were still 90 one-teacher schools (enrolments from 6 to 36) and 82 two-teacher schools (enrolments from 26 to 69).[38] Often these small schools became very "efficient" educationally, though this was very much dependent upon the teacher(s) involved, and frequently they became the centres of community social life with parents taking justifiable pride in and deep affection for their small school.[39]

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[37] The Education Gazette (South Australia), November 1954 lists factors to consider when selecting a High or Technical High School, pp. 238-240. See also D. Toomey, "Parents' Preferences in Secondary Education: An Australian Case", International Journal of Educational Science, Vol. 2 (1968), pp. 141-149.

[38] Karmel Report, p. 204.

[39] Hence the great outcry from country parents each time the closing of a small rural school is announced. A good example of this is provided by a recent letter in The Advertiser (Adelaide), 22 December, 1971. "We feel frustrated by the inclusion of our school in a 'blanket' ruling by people remote from us who are totally unaffected by it. The cost of maintaining our school and teacher's residence is insignificant in the scheme of things and the loss of our school will have detrimental and continuing effect on our children and our community." For the list of schools to be closed down at the end of 1971 in South Australia, see The Advertiser, 28 August, 1971.

The small country school offers a number of more intangible advantages in the education of a rural child. Obviously opportunities for social intercourse are restricted in the isolated districts, which means that he is cast back on to his own resources, necessarily becoming more self-reliant and less dependent on the outside world. This holds not only in the material sense but in the intellectual as well. Pupils trained to work under guidance and forced to rely on their own initiative in many respects receive a training superior to that of a large class taught by collective means. They learn to use books and other references judiciously and to rely on written work to a greater degree than city children. The rural child becomes individualistic and self-contained in his play habits and study, and he is able to progress at his own rate quite effectively. While hesitation and the lack of opportunity to appeal for assistance from a teacher may not altogether be a good thing at school in the eyes of many teachers, this independence of working may reap dividends at the tertiary level for the few who are fortunate enough to reach that phase.[40] Jackson and Marsden write of urban children of lower socio-economic background who find a strange change in abilities if they stay on at school, who suddenly "become more intelligent" after an undistinguished middle-school life.[41] Their explanation involves the assumption of responsibilities and the treatment of an adult, and these also play their part in the education of the rural child. Each student, instead of being merely one minute cog in the metropolitan machine of school and society,

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[40] This is probably one of the reasons why tertiary students from country schools are generally more satisfied with the preparation they receive for tertiary study than those from city schools. From our surveys on Diploma in Education students at the University of Adelaide (1969-70), 71% of those from country State schools thought they had been prepared well or very well compared with 59% of those from metropolitan State schools.

[41] B. Jackson and D. Marsden, Education and the Working Class, (Penguin 1962), pp. 220-1.

is able in the country to grow up with a sense of belonging and a feeling of value and importance to the school and the community.[42]

EDUCATION AT LARGER SCHOOLS

It can be argued that a higher quality education is provided at centrally-located schools which are larger, better equipped and more fully staffed. One justification for this is that only a larger school with a diversified and specialized staff can effectively and economically provide the various educational services demanded by a balanced curriculum tailored to the needs of the particular rural community in which the school is located. World-wide trends appear to lend evidence for this view, with the U.S.A., New Zealand and South Africa all having exhibited a tendency towards consolidation of schools.[43] Australia is now pursuing the same path, with parents more willing in the face of improved transport and communication for their children to be transported to larger schools.[44]

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[42] It is probably in the small rural school that Australian education comes closest to the Russian ideal of co-operation rather than competition in school, whereby the older and the more able children are encouraged to assist the younger and the less able, thus developing social responsibility. See J.J. Smolicz, "Selection, Competition and the Puritanical Ethos", Dialogue, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1969), pp. 40-53.

[43] In the U.S.A. between 1916 and 1936, the number of one-teacher schools decreased by 70,000, the number of consolidated schools increased by 12,000, and the number of children conveyed to school by transport provided at public expense increased to a total of 3¼ million daily. The Education Gazette; (South Australia), 1943, pp. 115-116.

[44] W.C. Radford, however, in 1949 viewed increasing consolidation with some concern, urging more research into what changes occurred in this process and what advantages of the small school, such as its more effective socializing power, could be incorporated in the large school. See "Socialization, The Large School and The Rural Child", The Forum of Education, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1949), pp. 64-74.

The trend, however, now seems to be in favour of organising primary and secondary education in *separate* institutions, that is, away from the area school idea. Yet, as Fitzgerald argues, schools which combine both phases of education need not necessarily be at a greater disadvantage than the small country high school.[45] Modern primary education courses are increasingly requiring specialized staff and facilities for the effective teaching of the crafts, foreign languages, art, science and physical education, and the sharing of such staff and equipment by every section of an eleven-year school would allow greater economy of scarce resources than would be possible with separate institutions.

INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS

The rural student, too, is generally taught by younger, less experienced teachers who flood into country areas either under compulsion of the bonding system or voluntarily, perhaps lured by the prospect of quicker promotion for country service. In South Australia, forty-six per cent of High and Technical High and eighty per cent of Area schools had in 1968 less than twenty per cent of staff who had taught for more than ten years. Again, fifty per cent of High and Technical High and only twenty per cent of Area schools had between twenty and forty per cent of staff who had taught more than ten years.[46] The Karmel Report objected to the sending of inexperienced teachers to small and remote country schools especially in view of the fact that many of them were only primary trained yet were required to spend

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[45] R.T. Fitzgerald, The Secondary School at Sixes and Sevens, (ACER, Melbourne, 1970), p. 98.

[46] South Australian Teachers Journal, Vol. 20, No. 9, October, 1968, p. 16.

all or part of their time in secondary teaching where no other person was working in the same subject area. Their recommendation was that an internship for at least one year be required in a larger school where professional assistance was available.[47]

Many of these teachers, having lived all their life in an urban environment, are resentful for being sent to the bush, lead lonely lives, easily become discouraged, lose enthusiasm for teaching and yearn to return to city life. Though they are most in need of professional asssociations and advice and ready access to in-service conferences, they are least in a position to take advantage of them. Again, the difficulty of obtaining comfortable residence in country areas is one of the chief causes of discontent.[48] Paradoxically too, the very qualifications that enable country teachers to do satisfactory work for children inside the school at the same time make them dissatisfied with the conditions they sometimes have to face outside the school.

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[47] Karmel Report, pp. 205-206.

[48] The Victorian Teacher Housing Survey in 1968 revealed that almost half (2,266) of the total number of Country Teachers surveyed was dissatisfied in varying degrees with their privately-arranged accommodation, whether in rented houses or board. The report claimed that "teacher housing is perhaps the greatest problem facing country education ... it is clear that unless dramatic action is taken country children will continue to suffer a major deprivation of educational opportunity". The Teachers' Journal (Victoria), Vol. 51, No. 7, (September, 1968), pp. 336-337. The Karmel Report recommended the provision of flats for country teachers, since it considered the boarding with local families irksome for both parties in that teachers are entitled to a degree of privacy and facilities for study and entertainment which are often unavailable in such homes, p. 206.

HIGH TEACHER MOBILITY RATE

In addition to the relative immaturity of teachers fresh from Teachers College is the related fact that teacher mobility in rural schools is very high. The Karmel Report discovered that nearly half of the staff in rural and special rural schools, and over forty per cent of those in Area schools, employed there in February 1968, had moved out of them by the end of that year. This is in contrast with High and Technical High schools which lost thirty per cent and thirty-two per cent of their respective staffs. The high mobility rate of country teachers contrasted with that of metropolitan teachers is clearly demonstrated in Figure 1 which analyses the various rates of turnover of staff at each level and in each type of government school in South Australia.[49]

Although high mobility of teachers is one avenue for introducing new ideas and opinions to conservative rural communities, in another sense it is the Achilles heel of the Australian education system which specially adversely affects the schools in the country. The frequent turnover of teaching personnel in rural areas contributes towards the instability of school plans and programmes and the discontinuity of school educational and extra-curricular activity. When teachers are allowed to remain in their positions for a longer period of time, they tend to have a greater sense of identification with the particular school and the rural community it serves. The typical rural teacher in Australia enjoys a considerable amount of prestige in the countryside. Since he is not subject to local boards of control, the teacher does not find it necessary to safe-guard his own interests by subordinating professional judgement

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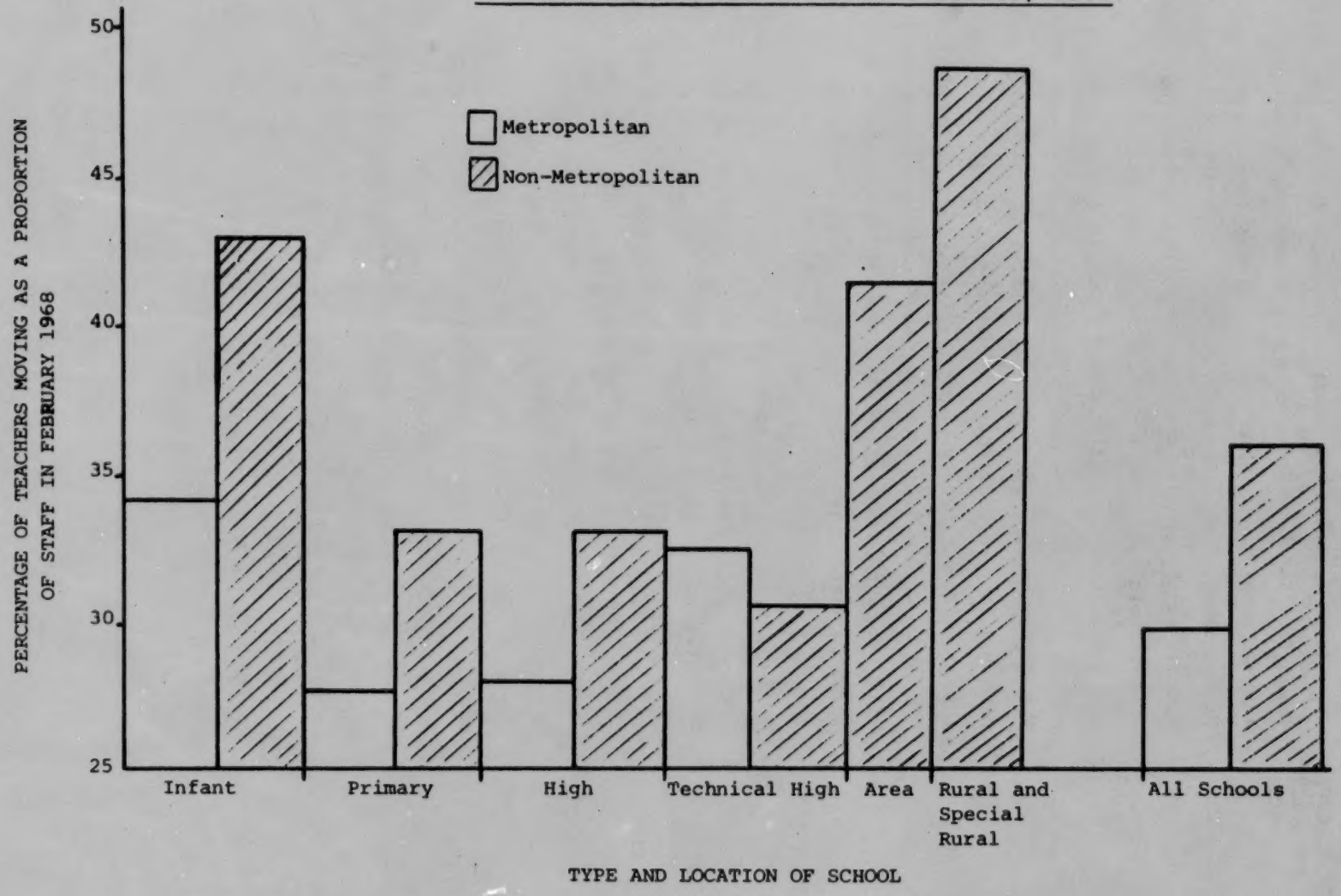
[49] Compiled from data presented in the Karmel Report, p. 121. Only in the case of Technical High Schools (only four of which were situated in the country) was the mobility rate higher in Metropolitan schools compared with those in the country.

Figure 1 : Movement of Teachers Related to Type and Location of South Australian Government School, 1968.



to personal considerations. On the other hand, however, he is likely to arouse a considerable degree of local hostility if he does not seize upon the opportunity to enhance this initial prestige by remaining in the community and participating in its cultural and sporting activities. The teacher who vanishes from the local scene at weekends to journey to Adelaide is in most instances rather despised. In the city, children and teachers are congregated in large units for a few hours of the day and then go their separate ways until the following morning. All school activities in such a situation must be confined within the school itself. When the rural school dismisses, however, the social group does not disperse, but continues to function under changed circumstances. After-school activities are thus oriented towards the rural community as a whole rather than the school alone. The teacher, for example, quite possibly belongs to the same town drama club or sporting team and partakes of the same social life as some of his senior pupils. This co-existence enables both teacher and students to understand and respect each other to a deeper degree than may be possible in a metropolitan context. Unfortunately the high mobility rates of country teachers, engendered by the promotion mentality which permeates the State educational system, very often destroys the teacher's symbiotic relationship with his milieu just at the time when he is getting established and accepted by the country folks.[50]

BADLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The high mobility rates of staff in country areas have another unfortunate effect. Despite the officially propounded policy of equality of educational opportunity (a policy so often used to justify the rigidly structured educational bureaucracies of Australian States) the net

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50 c.f. J.J. Smolicz, "Education and Aggression", Educational Philosophy and Theory, vol.2, no. 2, (1970), pp. 37-52.

result of this movement is that, on the average, teachers in the country are less well qualified than those in the city. In 1968, the percentages of (a) graduate teachers and (b) teachers with fewer than nine university units in the various types of secondary schools in South Australia were as follows: large High schools, (a) 43 and (b) 32; small High schools (enrolments under 600), (a) 46 and (b) 36; Technical High schools, (a) 21 and (b) 42; Area (primary and secondary) schools (a) 12 and (b) 61.[51] In science alone, the proportion of teachers of classes below fourth year level having (a) a science degree and (b) no tertiary science units in South Australian government schools in 1969 were as follows: High schools, (a) 39 and (b) 12; Technical High schools, (a) 24 and (b) 17; Area schools, (a) 3 and (b) 33.[52] Eighteen teachers *in charge of* small rural schools in the same year were unclassified indicating a very low level of qualification.[53] There is thus little doubt that present staffing procedures do not result in that equality of provision of qualified staff which the system ostensibly attempts to ensure. This means that children attending country schools, particularly Area Schools, are likely to receive inferior academic instruction. And this usually goes together with inferior buildings, facilities and cultural and intellectual environment. Thus linguistic and cultural handicaps encountered in such areas are being reinforced by inequality of treatment at school.

VARIATIONS IN ACHIEVEMENT

In the Eyre Peninsula survey, there were noticeable variations in the achievements of those who had received

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[51] South Australian Teachers Journal, vol. 20, no. 9, October, 1968, p. 15.

[52] South Australian Teachers Journal, 10 December, 1970.

[53] Karmel Report, p. 205.

their secondary school education in Adelaide and those who had received theirs in the peninsula or other rural areas of South Australia. The numbers who gained no examination successes were similar irrespective of the place of education. Yet fewer than twenty per cent of the total number of women who had attended rural schools obtained Leaving (fourth year) Certificates. This is in marked contrast to the forty-five per cent who had attended and obtained their Leaving in Adelaide schools. These figures may pinpoint a variation in the ability of the students; they may also indicate some difference in attitude of those parents who send their children to the capital to receive their education and those who feel no need to do so; they may also reflect the differences in the socio-economic backgrounds of students. Undoubtedly, however, they are also indicative of the quality and availability of teaching between those schools in isolated rural areas and those in the cities.

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS

Another factor militating against further education of the rural child is the smaller chance of winning Commonwealth scholarships as compared with his urban counterpart. Whereas twenty-five per cent of city applicants for Commonwealth Tertiary Scholarships (N.S.W.) commencing in 1968 were successful, only seventeen per cent of country applicants received offers.[54] Commonwealth Secondary Scholarship figures display the same trend. In his study on Common-

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[54] From D.J.A. Verco in "Australian College of Education Proceedings", 1969. See also A.F. Davies and S. Encel (Eds.), Australian Society, A Sociological Introduction. (Melbourne, 1970), p. 350.

wealth Scholarship winners in Victoria in 1964, Fensham obtained results which confirmed that country students are less successful in winning scholarships.[55]

From our sample of nearly 200 1969-1970 Diploma in Education students only 30% of those who had attended country secondary schools, compared with 56% from metropolitan State and half of those from metropolitan Technical High schools, had won Commonwealth Tertiary Scholarships.

Part explanation for this apparent discrimination, however, is that many country students who continue with their formal education beyond school level do so through Teachers Colleges on Education Department awards, and are therefore disqualified from also holding Commonwealth Scholarships. From the sample of Diploma in Education students, we found that 67% of those who had been to country secondary school level (compared with 46% of students from metropolitan State, 40% from Technical and 15% from Independent schools), and a further 15% on commencing their tertiary study.

The fairly high level of recruitment to the teaching service from country schools is also confirmed by the analysis of the sample of Eyre Peninsula women. Thus of

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[55] To compare groups of schools with widely varying sizes of forms, the author used an index of scholarship performance, defined as the ratio of the number of pupils offered scholarships to the total number of pupils in that form, rather than actual numbers of scholarships won. The indices at Form 4 level were 0.085 metropolitan and 0.050 country; at Form 5 level, 0.130 metropolitan and 0.090 country; at Form 6 level, 0.145 metropolitan and 0.100 country. Further subdivision by sex showed that discrimination at Form 6 level was greatest in the case of females at country schools. P.J. Fensham, "The Distribution of Commonwealth Scholarships in Victoria", The Australian Journal of Education, Vol. 9, 1965, pp. 239-254.

COUNTRY STUDENTS AND TEACHING

those who claimed a tertiary education, 62% entered Teachers College (18% of these had also attended university for some part of their teacher training) while only 20% entered university without any Teachers College attachments. Undoubtedly there are many who *prefer* teaching to any other profession. Yet there are a number of more subtle reasons why country students should enter the teaching force. It is possible for instance that in keeping with the rural child's relatively lower aspiration level as compared with the urban child, Teachers College appears more within their reach and ability. That institution is seen as a natural extension of school and teaching is the profession about which the rural child knows most from working with his teachers. The easiest and most familiar escape-route from the cramping conditions of rural life is thus the path to teaching.[56]

It may also be that rural students have a very exalted image of the teacher role and that this leads them into the teaching profession in adoration or emulation. In America Youmans discovered that his Kentucky sample of rural youth, some of whom were about to enter college, held their high school teachers in very high esteem.[57]

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[56] Compare Jackson and Marsden's sample of 88 English working-class children, 46 of whom became teachers. The majority had "let the automatic nature of the educational process take the decision for them: they had stayed on as long as they could, adding a teachers certificate to their other certificates, until they found themselves back in the classroom. It was as if education had never nourished in them any other capacities except those needed to score high marks in academic examinations." Many of the others who did not go teaching "looked back with longing to teaching as a 'safe' career". op cit., pp. 178-179.

[57] E.G. Youmans "Backgrounds of Rural Youth Planning to Enter College". Sociology of Education, Vols. 31-2. (1957-9), pp. 152-156.

Throughout their schooldays, many rural children are simply unaware that there exist broader horizons, or, if they are aware, are not encouraged to seek them.[58] Often this results in wrong specialization in school subjects or in taking a job which is below that which their potential ability warrants. In this respect, the needs of both the lower class urban child and the rural child are strikingly similar, yet arise for different reasons. The former is educationally strangled by social norms and beliefs of a sub-culture which is foreign to him and partly by the limitations of his own anti-intellectual milieu; the latter by his geographical isolation, and certain sub-cultural characteristics generally apparent in isolated rural areas. The lower class child in the city may vaguely know what offers, but cannot generally attain them; the rural child does not even know what is available, so has an even more unlikely chance of getting there. Many rural children scarcely even think of further education but undertake what is required of them until the time arrives to tread the limited paths that their parents and peers have followed. The paucity of social and occupational experiences available to the majority of these children is reflected in their rather meagre and unimaginative occupational goals. Their aspirations at high

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[58] This is a more subtle example of the type of unintentional patronisation that F. Riessman discusses in The Culturally Deprived Child, op. cit., pp. 21-3. A leader of the Urban League told of negro youths who were being over-warned by guidance officers about the unlikelihood of their obtaining professional jobs. Their aspirations were being discouraged and directed into more "realistic" spheres (postal clerks, policemen or mechanics). Not enough stress was being posited on the positive, exciting features connected with lively, interesting, professional careers to motivate the negro aspirant to overcome the realistically reported difficulties ahead.

school are generally not very well formulated nor very high,[59] and in very few cases are the avenues kept open long enough for their latent potential to come anywhere near fruition. Oeser and Emery found that the orientation of their sample of farm boys in the Mallee district of Victoria was overwhelmingly in favour of rural (85%) compared with urban occupations (15%).[60] In another rural community, the Upper Murray region of South Australia, social work students from Adelaide and Sydney Universities found that in 1959, one quarter of males leaving secondary schools worked on farms, another fifteen per cent took up clerical work, while thirty per cent of females became engaged in home duties.[61]

Statistics on *total* numbers of South Australian school leavers[62] also suggest that boys brought up on the land tend

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[59] Youmans found that one quarter of his sample of rural youth "aspired to do public work" which as he says meant any non-farm wage work; one sixth clerical work; one tenth farming; and only three per cent to enter business or a profession. One third expected to settle in a city, the chief reason being that they could not do the work of their preference in the local community. Youmans, op. cit.

[60] Orientation of town boys on the other hand was in the opposite direction, ninety-two per cent in favour of urban, eight per cent in favour of rural occupations. These figures, however, can only be taken as indications since numbers involved are very small. O.A. Oeser and F.E. Emery, op. cit., p. 213.

[61] Community Development in The South Australian Upper Murray, 1959, pp. 71-2.

[62] Compiled from figures in The Education Gazette (South Australia), 1952, 1960 and 1965.

to turn towards primary production as their first occupation. There is a similarly disproportionate number of country girls who leave school to work in "home duties" only, (see Table 1). In sharp contrast, far fewer children from metropolitan schools enter these limited occupations, but choose a considerably broader range of occupational activity after leaving school. There are undoubtedly many compensating features in living in the country isolated from centres of population, yet it appears that the effect of the limitation on vocational experience and opportunity plays a more important role than is generally appreciated. With the children of our Eyre Peninsula sample of women, farming and housewife duties accounted for 54% of the intended occupations, while these two categories among the mothers themselves totalled thirty-six per cent. Among the husbands, farmers made up fifty-four per cent of the occupations.

It may not, however, be only limitation of occupational experience and opportunity in a specific environment that is causing so many rural children to follow rural/farming occupations. A related phenomenon is the tendency for children to follow in the occupational wake of their parents through the influence of home cultural attitudes, hereditary inclination, social convenience or economic necessity. In evidence of this tendency in a different occupational sphere, many country students who do go on to tertiary education are the sons and daughters of teachers or ex-teachers. Bassett discovered from analysis of entrants to Armidale Teachers College that teachers' children had a strong propensity to become teachers themselves - twenty-five per cent of sons, thirty eight per cent of daughters.[63] This then provides a further explanation why country students go to Teachers

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[63] G.W. Bassett, "The Occupational Background of Teachers", Australian Journal of Education, Vol. 2, No. 2, (1958) and "Teachers and their Children", ibid, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1961) .

Table 1 : Percentages of all Male and Female School Leavers Going into "Primary Production" and "Home Duties" Respectively from Varying School Groups.

Year	Country High Schools		Area Schools		Larger Country Primary Schools		Rural, 1 Teacher Primary & Corresp. (Sec.only) Schools		Metropolitan High Schools		Metropolitan Technical H.S.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.10.50 to 30.9.51	26	34	53	60	33	55	56	84	8	7	3	20
1.10.58 to 30.9.59	22	31	50	43	34	62	84	67	7	7	2	18
1.10.66 to 30.9.67	20	15	43	29	27	48	75	65	2	2	2	4

College rather than to University, for in the country, those parents who have been educated at the tertiary level are more likely to have received their education at Teachers College.

Another still more subtle reason why rural children go to Teachers College Rather than to University is that Education Department Scholarships have a very strong appeal for those fifteen and sixteen year olds who harbour any aspirations for tertiary education. Burdened with the expense of having to board away from home, many of these students would not be able to afford financially to enter university directly and, since Education Department awards are offered earlier and are relatively easier to win than other scholarships, they become bonded at an early age.[64] These awards, unlike Commonwealth University and other Tertiary Scholarships, are not subject to a means test, and

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[64] In South Australia, Leaving Teachers Scholarships used to be offered on the results of the third year Public Examinations Board examination, Honours Teaching Scholarships on fourth year results. Since the abolition of third year examinations in 1968, Teaching Scholarships have been assisted only during fifth year at School. The Karmel Report in recommending abolition of bonding argued that it was undesirable for students to commit themselves at such an early age. "The student may be unaware of his potentialities or of the full implications of the decision. This may arouse resentment in the student who subsequently changes his mind as he becomes aware of other possibilities." p. 450. In view of his limited vocational experience, this is particularly so in the case of the *rural* child. We discovered from our sample of Diploma in Education students that half of those who had attended country secondary schools aspired to an occupation *other than in the Education Department*. Only one quarter of those who had attended metropolitan State schools indicated this.

this too, as well as their more generous scale, causes many students to refuse Commonwealth in favour of Education Department scholarships.

NARROWNESS OF SUBJECT CHOICE

Of those select few in the country who are accepted into universities the overwhelming majority specialize in arts and science. This choice reflects to some degree the availability of Education Department awards in these faculties. Undoubtedly it also mirrors the narrowness of subject choice at country schools. In any case, committal to these courses for those who study university as well as college subjects, and to college courses for those who study only internal units, means severe limitation of choice outside of teaching for any whose horizons are later broadened.

LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

Findings from the sample of Eyre Peninsula women showed little change in the pattern of tertiary education according to age, and there was an absence of any noteworthy increase in tertiary qualifications among the younger women.[65] This indicates the limited nature of educational provision available beyond secondary level. It also probably reflects a reluctance on the part of the farm child to move away from his local district. Such a move involves changes in milieu which lead to considerable weakening and occasionally even disruption of relations with primary groups among whom he was originally socialized.[66] This has important implications in the case of the rural child, for his personality may be profoundly affected. He

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[65] Twenty-two per cent of those under thirty; 16% of those between 30-50, and 19% of those over 50 years of age had had some form of tertiary education.

[66] See T. Luckmann and P. Berger, "Social Mobility and Personal Identity", European Journal of Sociology, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1964), pp. 331-344.

is prone to be shy and awkward in strange company and unfamiliar surroundings since the environment in which he grew up offered little opportunity for social intercourse to stimulate reactions and accelerate development of personality. He is therefore likely to lack self-assurance, to feel that in the urban environment he does not rank as an equal with the city child.[67] Increased opportunities for winning scholarships would not ameliorate this problem for it is essentially social and psychological, not financial;[68] nor would it help overcome the dearth of parental information about specialization, college, university, courses and careers.

COUNTRY STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES

Whatever the reason, there is validity in the assertion that those who attend country secondary schools are less likely to go to university than those who attend in the metropolitan area. A study of school leavers in 1959-60

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[67] Ferge quotes figures which show that research workers who come from peasant families placed themselves on a seven-rung ladder representing social prestige considerably *lower* than those who came from other types of families. It may be that the former do not evaluate their own work much higher than that done by their parents; or that they had expected more from scientific work than what they had actually achieved and this disappointment was vented in their answers. A third motive, which Ferge argues is the dominant one, is the one we have stated. op. cit., pp. 93-94.

[68] From 1972 approximately 200 scholarships will be available in South Australia for students living in isolated country areas where there are no secondary schools or only limited secondary educational facilities. The winners of these scholarships, which will be awarded after a means test, will receive up to $370 a year to help offset the cost of boarding away from home to study. The Minister of Education claims they will be "a real advance towards the provision of equal educational opportunity for country students." The Australian, 15th July, 1971.

by Radford shows this clearly. Whereas 14.1% of male and 3.9% of female leavers from city schools entered university, only 4.9% of males and 2.1% of females leaving country schools did so. Only 2.4% of all university entrants in 1959-60 were farmers' sons, this percentage being the lowest except for sons of unskilled or semi-skilled fathers.[69] The individual percentages for various rural communities naturally vary a great deal. The survey in the Upper Murray area of South Australia in 1959 revealed that only 1.8% of the total enrolment at secondary schools in the region entered university.[70]

Among those rural students who graduate, only a small number continue in Honours schools. Of the Arts undergraduates at the University of Melbourne in 1959, 15% were in the Honours schools. It was found that one of the three main variables which was operating in selection for Honours was the type of school attended. When the inferior quality of teaching (in terms of experience, maturity and qualification) and the high mobility rate of teachers in country schools are taken into account, it is not entirely unexpected that a mere three per cent of those Honours students had attended rural schools (as compared with 17% from metropolitan State high and 26% from the major "Public" schools).[71]

LONG DISTANCES

There are a variety of other factors which militate against equality of opportunity in education as far as the rural child is concerned. In Australia there are the perennial problems of long distances, late hours and tiredness.

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69 W.C. Radford, School Leavers in Australia, 1959-60. (A.C.E.R., Melbourne, 1962), pp. 123-4.

70 op. cit., pp. 71-72.

71 Davies and Encel (1965), op. cit., p. 89.

Children in rural areas frequently have to cycle considerable distances either to school or to a bus-route, and often this travelling is in addition to helping with farm chores before and after school. It means early to bed, early to rise; more particularly in the educational context, it means no after-school play with friends and very little after-dinner homework.[72]

EMPAHSIS ON SPEED AND TIME-RESTRICTION

Within the school, there is the disadvantage which is centred around the "pace" of country life. The rural child is usually not intellectually promiscuous but prefers to remain for some time on particular tasks, progressing through them at his own rate. It can be argued, therefore, that he is handicapped in the traditional school situation in which study is strictly regulated by bells, and streaming is determined and progress measured on results in speed tests. Wallach and Kogan in attempting to formulate "creativity tests" used a time-free context on the hypothesis that in any sequence of responses from children, stereotyped associates came first, unique ones later.[73] If such a time-free context could be extended to the whole school situation at least this particular disadvantage suffered by the rural child could be considerably reduced. Country students often perform much more creditably (both in comparison with their own previous work and in relation to other students) in their study at the tertiary level where there is more allowance made for individual working rates. It is therefore suggested that in the future more schools have at least some periods

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[72] In the case of teachers, the tradition has grown up that the most distant family using the bus should board the teacher who drives it. Such an arrangement is often detrimental to the school tasks of that teacher, who must arrive and leave the school with the pupils. The Karmel Report concludes that school bus-driving should not be the function of school teachers (p. 207).

[73] M.A. Wallach and N. Kogan, "A New Look at the Creativity-Intelligence Distinction", Journal of Personality, Vol. 33 (1965), pp. 348-369.

with no time limits and allow discussions to continue for extended periods depending on student interest.

Moreton and Butcher ascertained that rural children in England *were* handicapped in speeded tests but that, in a time-free context, mean differences between the rural and urban groups were reduced (and none was significant).[74] This was verified by Armstrong who found that the introduction of a test-free procedure of selection in West Riding, England, resulted not only in rural children having greater opportunities of gaining entrance to grammar schools (a rise of seven per cent), but also they merited their selection by subsequent achievement.[75] He does not comment as to why these rural children improved their position in later schooling, but in view of what has been discussed, we would suggest a greater degree of application to the task at hand (acquired from independence in working and determination to succeed) and less emphasis on speed and time-restriction.

LITTLE INCENTIVE

Within our current educational structures, however, success is largely measured in terms of results of time limited tests and, at higher levels of secondary education, in external examinations. Yet for the few academically oriented students in country schools there may be little incentive to work intensively in a competitive situation which is tacitly assumed to exist in most metropolitan schools.[76] The child does merely what is required, one

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[74] Moreton, C.A., and Butcher, H.J., "Are Rural Children Handicapped by Use of Speeded Tests in Selection Procedures?" British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 33, (1963), pp. 22-30.

[75] H.G. Armstrong, "A Comparison of Rural Schools' Performance in a Test-Controlled and Test-Free Selection Procedure at Eleven". British Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 34 (1964), pp. 237-246.

[76] See J.J. Smolicz, "Scholastic Competition: A Latent Function of Education?" Educational Philosophy and Theory, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1969), pp. 51-62.

step after another, with little perspective, and does not really understand what studying "means" until the competitiveness of city schooling wrenches him from academic lethargy. He may then over-react against the "narrow horizons" in a country town and "use" education as the only logical avenue of escape.[77]

THE CULTURAL FACTOR

In discussing the effect of the inequalities in education in rural areas one should also mention the pressure of the *cultural* factor discriminating against the child whose cultural experience and environment are considerably limited in comparison with his city counterpart. The cultural factor is transmitted by parents through the creation of a suitable intellectual milieu, the presence of a certain type of conversation, discussion, and other cultural activities which all have the effect of stimulating and developing a child's ability to indulge in conceptual thought. Cultural advantages of this type operate most strongly in favor of students who engage in humanistic pursuits; thus a rural (or a working-class) child who opts for physics or chemistry would be less handicapped on this account than his counterpart who takes up history, literature or the arts. After investigating the results of South Australian country and metropolitan students in Matriculation and Leaving chemistry and physics, Broadhurst concluded that in those subjects country students perform much better than those in the city.[78]

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[77] Compare this with the breakthrough of a working-class child like Richard Hoggart. See his autobiography in R. Goldman, op. cit.

[78] Broadhurst, N.A. "A measure of some learning outcomes in Matriculation Chemistry in South Australia". Australian Science Teachers Journal, Vol. 15, (1969), pp. 67-70, and "A Study of Matriculation Achievement Scores of the Public Examinations Board in South Australia in 1967", South Australian Education, no. 5, (April, 1970), pp. 22-25.

It could be argued that smaller classes in country schools contribute towards this higher performance, but laboratory facilities and equipment in many country schools are grossly inadequate. A deeper reason may underline country students' better performances in science, namely, their upbringing in a more *natural* environment compared with the city, enabling them to experience scientific phenomena from a very early age in a situation less artificial than the laboratory. This experience would be reinforced by the emphasis in rural life on practical experience rather than theoretical learning.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

RETENTION RATES

Probably the best demonstration of the educational inequalities suffered by rural children is provided by the much earlier leaving from school of students in the country compared with those in the city. Indeed, this situation can be accounted for only in terms of accumulation of educational handicaps already described. A number of different studies in the various States of Australia confirm that rural retention rates are considerably lower than those in the city. In New South Wales, figures show a Form 1 to Form 6 retention rate of 21.4% for city State schools and 15.4% for country State schools. The disproportion is greater if non-government schools are included, the respective rates being 33.2% and 15.3%.[79]

Enrolment figures at Victorian State secondary schools over the period 1955-1962 also show a marked drop in retention rates of country schools as compared with metropolitan schools. For every one hundred students entering Form 1 in metropolitan secondary schools, twenty-two reached Form 6, while the corresponding number for country secondary schools was eleven.[80] Nor is this gap narrowing, for the retention rate from 1963 to 1968 for boys at city schools was still being halved in the sixth year in the case of boys from

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[79] D.J.A. Verco, in "Australian College of Educational Proceedings," 1969.

[80] From The Development of Tertiary Education in Victoria, 1963-1972. (August, 1963), by the Committee for Development of Tertiary Education in Victoria.

country schools.[81]

In South Australia, retention rates in government country schools were lower than those in government city schools for all grades in the period 1962-1968. The greatest discrepancy between the rates occurred at the fifth year level since many country schools did not cater for students in this year. For every 1,000 students entering first year in government secondary schools in metropolitan and country areas in 1965, five hundred and twenty and four hundred and twenty respectively were in fourth year three years later. One thousand students of the cohort entering first year three years earlier in 1962 were reduced by 1965 to 440 and 290 respectively. Although the discrepancy in retention rates between metropolitan and country schools is narrowing in junior secondary grades, there is no evidence of a similar trend in senior grades.[82]

EARLY LEAVING: MALES

Gruen in Australian Society stresses that the phenomenon of early leaving at country schools applies particularly to *males*. Evidence of this can be seen in statistics both on a single country community and on a statewide basis. The survey in the Upper Murray region of South Australia in 1959 concluded that approximately twenty per cent of boys leave school during second year and 29% during third year. Again, South Australian State figures on school grades of males leaving various types of schools in country and city areas in two widely separated years show clearly that more boys in country schools leave earlier than boys from city schools. (See Table 2).

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81 Figures from the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, quoted in T. Roper, The Myth of Equality (Melbourne, 1971), p. 43.

82 Karmel Report, pp. 63-64.

Table 2 : Percentages of South Australian Male School Leavers at First and Second Year Levels According to School Group.[83]

Grade at Leaving	Metropolitan High Schools	Country High Schools	Area Schools
1 October 1950 - 30 September 1951			
First Year	15	30	28
Second Year	16	27	23
1 October 1963 - 30 September 1964			
First Year	2	10	9
Second Year	8	20	17

EARLY LEAVING: FEMALES

On the other hand, the report of a UNESCO study (1964) drew attention to the inequalities that existed in the education of *females* in rural areas.[84] In seeking access to all levels of education, girls from rural areas encounter two obstacles - discrimination in the form of a prejudiced attitude of educational authorities and parents towards the education of girls, and the fact that towns are better off than country districts. In theory there appear to be few differences in the education given in urban and rural schools; in practice, a rural girl has fewer chances of receiving the education gained by children from urban areas. Again, South Australian statistics on school grades of girls leaving country and city schools bear evidence on this point. (see Table 3).

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83 Compiled from figures in The Education Gazette (South Australia), 1952 and 1965.

84 "Access of Girls and Women to Education in Rural Areas: a comparative study", Educational Studies and Documents, No. 51 - UNESCO, p. 4.

Table 3 : Percentages of South Australian Female School Leavers at First and Second Year Levels According to School Group.[85]

Grade at Leaving	Metropolitan High Schools	Country High Schools	Area Schools
1 October 1950 - 30 September 1961			
First Year	20	29	21
Second Year	24	30	24
1 October 1963 - 30 September 1964			
First Year	2	8	4
Second Year	9	17	10

In the Eyre Peninsula survey, there were signs of a tendency for the younger women to stay longer at school. Of those women over fifty years, only sixteen per cent attended school after fifteen years of age (the compulsory school leaving age from 1963); of those between 30 and 50 years, the percentage had risen to 31; while approximately half of those under thirty years had attended school beyond the present compulsory age limit. Similarly the level of education received in terms of examination successes improved down the age scale. The percentages of those who had gained passes at Leaving (fourth year) or Leaving Honours (fifth year) level were respectively, 12, 17, and 31.

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[85] Compiled from figures in The Education Gazette (South Australia), 1952 and 1965.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Over the years the educational facilities in the country have obviously improved at secondary level. This is seen clearly in the decrease in the number of people from these areas with primary education only. (In the Eyre Peninsula sample, the figures were 59% (over 50 years); 45% (between 30 and 50); 9% (under 30)). It may also be reflected in the increasing proportion of rural children who are receiving their education in local State schools rather than in independent schools outside their district. From Eyre Peninsula figures there was a decrease in the percentage of children sent to private schools when compared with their mothers' own education. Enrolment at fee-paying independent schools seemed to have been the only practical way in which the parents could have obtained a high school education to matriculation level.[86] On the other hand, although the educational opportunities for their children do not appear to have changed significantly the decreased percentage of children going to private schools is undoubtedly related to an improvement in recent years in the provision of State schools in that rural region.[87]

While this in itself is a noteworthy achievement, it must be stressed again that increasing quantity is no certain guarantee of increasing quality. Quite a high proportion of country parents send their children to the

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[86] No boarding school exists in the peninsula except for St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Convent at Whyalla which provides girls with an education to Leaving Certificate level. Thus attendance at private schools necessarily means boarding in Adelaide.

[87] Fitzgerald notes that enrolments at independent colleges in other States, particularly N.S.W., are also adversely affected by the expanding network of government high schools in rural areas. R.T. Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 98.

nearest State primary school, but later transfer them to a private school in Adelaide.[88] In some instances this may be a logical choice when the factor of distance to the nearest secondary school is taken into consideration, particularly for those children who had attended one-teacher schools. Yet might not this also indicate a realistic appreciation on the part of parents in country areas that the opportunities and chances of success for their children at country secondary schools are not as great as at city schools? The possibility cannot be lightly dismissed especially in the light of the inequalities in education for the rural child already discussed.

SOME REASONS FOR EARLY LEAVING

Most country schools do not cater for Matriculation students which necessitates those aspiring to tertiary education to change schools in midstream merely to undertake the Matriculation year. This changing of milieu from a rural to an urban environment is one of the most significant explanations for the inclination of the rural child to leave school at an earlier age than the one attending a city school. Another more tangible factor is the more limited opportunity at country schools of winning scholarships in the first place. But the most fundamental reason underlying early leaving is the emphasis in rural communities on practical experience rather than "book learning". This typically rural attitude is indeed a formidable barrier which educational systems (whether in a capitalist or communist society) have generally failed to solve. Australian education authorities, in casting about for a scheme that would break down the isolationism of separated

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[88] Between October 1963 and September 1964, twenty-nine per cent males and thirty-two per cent females of all those leaving *country* primary schools in South Australia and not continuing at State secondary schools transferred to private schools and colleges. Compiled from figures in The Education Gazette (South Australia), 1965.

rural communities and enmesh teachers and children into a larger net of life, found one answer in the Area School. In part, this type of school was an attempt to amalgamate resources from the small one-teacher schools into more inclusive units. But the core belief was that education must be brought closer to the day-to-day life of the people, that children should have the opportunity to use their hands as well as their minds. In the formal realms of education, the aim was to have children thinking initially from their own base and experience, which is vital if one accepts the Piagetian view that new knowledge can be acquired only in terms of knowledge already possessed. The rural child has experience and knowledge of country life and farm matters which may be utilised as convenient starting points in education, provided a strict, inappropriate curriculum constituted by city administrators for city children is not imposed upon him. To a certain degree, the tailoring of school curricula of country schools to fit more effectively the everyday life experiences of the rural child has been a commendable move in the right direction. Yet care must be taken not to transgress too far on the other side of the educational fence. What begins as realistic alteration in curricula content to fit a different environment from that in which they were drawn up can very easily and swiftly turn to patronisation and condescension. Such alteration may automatically limit the range of the students' vocational opportunities.[89] A.J. Greenhalgh in 1949 attacked the Area School as a morsel of appeasement with which authorities could educationally fob off rural parents. He considered such a school to be geographically incongruous and socially inept in Australia, since it thrived best in lands of small

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[89] See Footnote 58.

distances and close settlement.[90] In our opinion, however, the Area school does appear a very worthwhile attempt to break the perpetuation of that cleavage between school and "real life" which for so long has beena restricting factor on the effectiveness of much of the school's work. That fewer boys and girls leave Area schools at first and second year level than country High schools is at least some indication of their greater holding power[91] by reason of the less strictly academic, more rural-oriented curricula.

Yet this positing of less stress on intellectual and educational attainment and more on practical skill still remains deeply ingrained in the mentality of rural folk. From polls in the past, it has been found that fewer farm owners have wanted the school leaving age raised than any other occupational category.[92] In their investigations in the Mallee district of Victoria, Oeser and Emery discovered a rejection of school because of its emphasis on English language and literature, mastery of which appeared to have for the local community no perceived connection with

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[90] A.J. Greenhalgh, "The Plight of Rural Education", The Australian Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 3 (September 1949), pp. 72-80. His answer was the *Residential School* designed and run by the State through the Department of Education and this type of school he considered "could truly equalise educational opportunity between rural and urban children."

[91] See tables on retention rates, pp. 48, 49.

[92] For example, see Australian Public Opinion Polls, October, 1943, quoted in Davies and Encel, op. cit., p. 350.

skill in any of the productive activities common to the community.[93] Anything that contributes to the maintenance of the common dichotomy between education and practical ability may be regarded as increasing the resistance of a rural community to education. They also found twice as much interest in further education, and a far greater percentage of parents frequently helping with homework, among town families than among farm families.[94] The vital influence that parental attitudes have on a child's education has been repeatedly demonstrated by educational research.[95] Indifferent parental attitudes to further education and low educational and occupational aspirations of parents and children both lead to a wastage of talent in rural regions.

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[93] op. cit., pp. 163-4. Compare with Jackson and Marsden's comment that for working-class children, *early* success in the primary school was a prerequisite for any further achievement, and early success meant quicker and eager mastery of *reading*. op. cit., p. 100.

[94] Oeser and Emery, op. cit., pp. 151, 153.

[95] Recent research has tended to suggest that factors measuring the overall quality of a school have minor educational consequences, whether for educational aspirations or academic performance, especially as compared to family background characteristics; that is, parental aspirations and encouragement of further education can over-ride a rural or a lower-class background. See for example, D. Kandel and G. Lesser, "School, Family and Peer Influences on Educational Plans of Adolescents in U.S A. and Denmark", Sociology of Education, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Summer, 1970).

ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATION OF RURAL PARENTS.

Despite the spectacular upward trend in female employment over the whole of Australia[96], rural areas appear to be, in the occupational sphere at least, male-dominated societies. In these areas women work in a subordinate capacity and, where men and women work together, men hold the positions of responsibility, and decision-making is their prerogative. The inculcation by a traditional rural society of the belief that there is a "natural" or "normal" role for women creates one of the most formidable barriers for the occupational and educational aspirations of women in country regions.

MARRIED WOMEN AND TEACHING

There is, however, at least one trend which tends to counteract the brain-drain from the country as far as the female side of the picture is concerned. This is the fairly high percentage of women with tertiary education (some of them city bred) who upon marriage resign from teaching in country schools and settle locally in the district.[97] With the abolition of many of the small schools, those wishing to teach have to travel considerable distances to Area or High Schools. Such women, particularly if they come from relatively isolated farming properties, cannot afford to spend the greater part of each day away from their homes. In all probability,

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[96] See G. Ford, "Work" in Davies and Encel, op. cit., pp. 87-90.

[97] In the Eyre Peninsula sample of women, only two were teachers after marriage in contrast to the forty who had taught before marriage.

the policy of the Education Department in the past contributed towards the resignation rate. Married women could not be employed on a permanent basis and were therefore liable to instant dismissal.[98] That many married women would like to teach if given fair opportunity is evidenced by the fact that of those in the Eyre Peninsula sample not in employment outside the home, but expressing a desire to be so, one in five would choose school teaching.

AGRICULTURAL STUDY

There is evidence of the need for the opportunity for women in rural areas also to undertake some form of agricultural study. The number of people actually occupied in farming has decreased in recent years with the trend towards larger properties, and it might be surmised that in many instances wives represent the only assistance readily available to their husbands. As such, it is likely that they would on occasions have to make decisions relating to farm work. Many of those girls, therefore, who leave school in the country to take up home duties would benefit from at least some agricultural study if it were readily available. Women in particular hold the key to the stability of rural families, yet few opportunities exist in Australia for girls who will become wives and mothers of farmers to acquire a formal education in aspects of farm management, and no Australian agricultural college accepts women to full-time courses.[99]

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[98] Several improvements in the conditions of female employment in teaching have been introduced in recent years, however. They can now be promoted, and may elect to become superannuated provided they fulfil medical requirements. A considerable number of married women are now employed as teachers.

[99] J. Paughton, A Survey on the Demands and Opportunities for Agriculture and Veterinary Education for Women in Australia. Preliminary Report. School of Agriculture, The University of Melbourne,

WOMEN, THE MORE HIGHLY EDUCATED

In terms of level reached in formal education, however, women in rural communities are on the average better educated than men.[100] Our survey on Diploma in Education students showed that in the country, fewer mothers (26%) had had a primary education only, than fathers (41%), and also that more mothers (22%) had attended some form of tertiary institution than fathers (18%). On Eyre Peninsula, the sample showed that up to the school leaving age of fifteen, the difference between parents was not so apparent. More than thirty per cent of the women, however, continued their schooling after fifteen years of age compared with only thirteen per cent of their menfolk. The discrepancy is accentuated still more at the tertiary level, with forty-five of the wives compared with merely ten of their husbands having received an education at that level.[101] No evidence was disclosed that any of the men directly engaged in farming, or employed in activities closely allied with the farming industry, had experienced any formal education (including agricultural education) beyond the secondary school stage.

Why are men in rural areas less well-educated than their womenfolk? No doubt there is a lack of tradition for farmers' sons to aspire to any form of higher education which would be thought unnecessary for their future adult

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100 Oeser and Emery found that in their sample in the Victorian Mallee area, half as many women as men had reached seventh standard or below but nearly twice as many had achieved eighth or nineth standard. op. cit., p. 150.

101 Of the ten men, seven had attended teachers college or university, one a theological college and the other two institutions offering a technical education. In the case of the women, twenty-eight had attended teachers college, nine, university and the other eight, either technical colleges or nurse-training institutions.

activities.[102] Girls, on the other hand, would not have a similar automatic security of employment. They could only gain such security through marriage or failing this, would have to find an occupation for which they would have to be educated not unlike city girls and boys.

INTERESTS OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES

It is therefore likely that the relatively poorly-educated husbands tend to be unsympathetic, if not discouraging, towards the interests of their more highly educated wives. One could argue with some justification that in rural communities such husbands act as a drag on any interests or ambitions which their wives would have in the educational and cultural spheres.[103]

Lack of common interests between husbands and wives provides useful supporting evidence for gauging whether this assumption is at all valid. Impressionistic statements frequently are made about the existence of a gulf in social relationships between men and women in Australia. McKenzie asserted that rural men spend their leisure-time in activities that are an extension of their daily work.[104] Certainly, the wives in the Eyre Peninsula study did not appear to

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102 Oeser and Emery found that farm parents desire more education for their daughters than for their sons, op. cit., pp. 151-2. Of Radford's sample of 79 farm parents, 50 were not in favour of educating their children at the secondary level, and of these, 76% thought that such education was unnecessary and therefore dispensable, op. cit., p. 67.

103 In a pilot survey in rural districts around Crystal Brook, a small town about 150 miles north of Adelaide, prior to the Eyre Peninsula survey, the attitude of husbands to their wives' educational activities was explored. Some respondents answered that their husbands were disinterested, but the majority avoided a direct reply. (1967). See Rooth, S.J. op. cit., p. 46.

104 McKenzie, N. Women in Australia. (Angus and Robertson, 1963), p. 77.

share their husbands' occupational interests, nor in their turn did the husbands appear to have the cultural and domestic interests of their wives. Ninety-three out of two hundred and fifty-eight women did not share any interest with their husbands, while for the others sport and dancing accounted for half of the interests which they claimed to share with their husbands. A fairly large number (85) of women had only "domestic" interests. This is a reflection of the strength as well as the acceptance of the traditional attitude in rural areas of the role of the woman as home-maker and housekeeper. The comparative geographical isolation of many rural wives, their relatively large families and correspondingly greater work-load at home, are additional factors which lessen the amount of time the married woman in the country has available to pursue her *own* interests.[105] F.G. Gruen comments that "rural Australia might be regarded as a man's country", as evidenced by the high masculinity ratio for rural areas.[106] In addition, forty per cent of working males in rural areas are employers or self-employed. Males are not only more numerous in country regions but they are also more concerned with their work situation than are men in urban areas. Home and work activities commingle in the country whereas in the city they are compartmentalised. This is of more than ordinary significance in the educational arena. The rural child at an early age is introduced to the business of making a living and participates in materially profitable activities.

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[105] Oeser and Emery, op. cit., p. 134.

[106] 117:100 in rural areas in 1966 compared with 101:100 for Australia as a whole. See Davies and Encel, op. cit., p. 341.

MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANISATIONS

As far as the rural woman is concerned, one of the safety-valves for the sense of insecurity in a man's world, where men spend leisure-time in extensions of their work interest, is membership in various organisations.[107] In part, membership offers at least one solution to basic social needs of women in isolated districts, such as the need to seek the company of others and relief from the routine of housework. In part also, membership offers an opportunity for those who wish to render service to the community and to assist others. Often this includes the activity of money-raising which appears to be left almost exclusively in the hands of women in country areas.

In the sphere of education, what is of interest here is the particular age group of women who join school organisations and assist in the general welfare of school children. The Eyre Peninsula survey showed that only three per cent of women in the over fifty years of age bracket and seventeen per cent of these between twenty and thirty years were members. In both these age ranges, school bodies came well down the list in terms of membership when compared with other types of organisations. That twenty three per cent of women between thirty and fifty years were members, and that this percentage was higher than for any other type of organisation, indicates, that greatest interest in educational activities in such a community is taken by women in the middle age bracket, who presumably have direct contact with the school because of their children's attendance there.

There are still other reasons why women in the country participate in local organisations. One of these is the wish to understand and appreciate aspects of their environment

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[107] McKenzie, op. cit., p. 77.

and to improve their knowledge of the wider world. Reasons in this category may range from a desire to understand more about their own children to an interest in national and international affairs. For an educationist, this latter group of reasons is of the greatest importance, for it provides definite guidelines for the construction of a framework within which programmes of education, and in particular adult education, can be initiated.

The Country Women's Association (C.W.A.) and the Women's Agricultural Bureau (W.A.B.) for example, while they nominally retain their early objectives, both have shown in their programmes an extension of interest in terms of the number and scope of activities available. From instruction in handicrafts (begun in 1933), C.W.A. courses have progressively been extended to include schools in music, art, drama and leadership; and through the W.A.B. women can attend courses in agriculture and in local government. These, and similar interest in more formal educational activities, and an interest in and concern for the welfare of other communities in Australia and overseas countries, are more recent developments in the programmes offered by these two organisations.[108] More than half of the Eyre Peninsula sample were members of the organisations, with the C.W.A. having approximately four times the membership of the W.A.B. From the nature of their activities and the extent of their membership it is apparent that they both play a vital role in the education of country women and in

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[108] For more detailed information on these two agricultural organisations, see: History of the South Australian C.W.A. Inc., published by the South Australian C.W.A. (1962). So We Grow, published by the South Australian C.W.A. on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary(1962). Souvenir Supplement to The South Australian Country Women, 31 August, 1962.

countering their loneliness and isolation.

ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Adult Education activities provide another means by which people in isolated rural communities may continue their formal education. It is true that adult educators have never succeeded in attracting more than a small proportion of the total population into education activities. Those actively involved in adult education programmes have themselves taken the initiative to further their education, while little encouragement has been given to those apparently disinterested in or unaware of adult education. In 1960, Moroney concluded that in New South Wales, adult education was so remote that many people may never have heard of it.[109] Non-involvement in the Eyre Peninsula sample was highest for those over the age of fifty years, of whom sixty-three per cent listed no educational activities. This contrasted with approximately forty per cent of those under fifty years. Yet a more significant discovery in that rural region was that, nearly a decade after Moroney's conclusion, a large number of women *did* participate, especially those in the younger age groups who had taken part in *a number* of adult education activities.

Adult education differs from formal school education in that it is never compulsory and must to some degree be closely linked to the desire of people to attend activities. The organisation of adult education depends therefore on the initiative of public or private bodies to meet manifest needs consciously felt and expressed, or latent needs of which the population is not yet fully aware; finally there are those needs which may first have to be created before

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109 Moroney, M.B., "Adult Education in New South Wales, Its Present Condition and Future Possibilities". Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Sydney, 1960.

they can be satisfied. There is no guarantee of the continuity of any activity, and this increases the challenge for adult educators to adapt programmes to needs which may be changing constantly.

The proper satisfaction of the less obvious needs requires the adult educator to understand the concept of adult life cycles and the developmental tasks and social roles that face all people in the course of their lives. This understanding might lead to the formation of programmes that are not merely a repetition of activities previously offered in response to expressed interests. It may, for example, be wrong to assume that women whose children have begun fulltime schooling derive much benefit from hobby and craft classes which are often arranged to use up the leisure-time of rural women. For many, it might be more beneficial if educators were to examine the role of continuing education in reshaping occupational skills that otherwise may be neglected or forgotten.[110]

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[110] R.J. Havighurst (Sociological Backgrounds of Adult Education, p. 19) suggests that educational programmes can be formulated to help people improve their performance in various "social roles", such as those of worker, parent, spouse, home-maker, citizen, neighbour, friend, club or association member. The task of rearing children might for example be expected to give rise to courses in child development and family life. Educating people to be more effective in their "social roles" is linked with the belief that education should no longer be regarded as essentially preparatory but that it is also a way of meeting the demands and aspirations of the present period of an individual's life. In addition to the social role, therefore, each individual also has "developmental tasks" which must be achieved at or about a certain time in life. The use of leisure, for instance, is an emerging "developmental task" in modern society.

Buhler described the entire life cycle in terms of ten phases, each with a particular problem and a particular achievement.[111] The young married woman aged 20-30 years is concerned to become a better housekeeper and mother, while ten years later she wishes more to improve her occupational and home-making competence. Women in their forties display a growing interest in civic and cultural study and activity at a period in their lives when they are more free to assume roles of worker and club member, and when the role of mother has become less important and demanding. When, despite the growing amount of leisure which women have, no new sources of motivation face them, they tend to drop out of adult education activities, especially if these are of a rather conventional type with little attempt to initiate new areas of interest. It is our belief that, apart from a few individuals of exceptional ability and breadth of interest, some form of initiation is usually necessary before one's intellectual interests can be sufficiently roused to "take off" on their own. Unfortunately such initiation of country folk, be they school children or their parents, into many important aspects of our culture is still at a very rudimentary stage.

The present nature of adult education activities in a rural community may range across such categories as craftwork-hobbies, rural, vocational and leadership. It would be difficult to determine how far such activities meet the felt and expressed, or the still latent, needs of countryfolk. Without exception, they are arranged by educational authorities occasionally working in conjunction with voluntary state-wide organisations. They involve programmes often proposed by educators living outside and

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111 Buhler, C. Psychologie im Leben Unserer Zeit, (Munich, Droemer-Know, 1962).

therefore not familiar with the particular local community.[112] These programmes reflect the limited resources and facilities available to the relatively isolated rural areas, where any continuing activity usually depends upon the existence and willingness of a local schoolteacher to act as an adult tutor.[113]

J.L.J. Wilson, writing about changing attitudes to adult education in 1964, noted that:

> "... the spread of advanced secondary and tertiary education in the war and postwar years, coupled with social, economic and technological change, is stimulating a rising interest among the better educated."[114]

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[112] The University of New England at Armidale, the only rural university in Australia, is one exception. For a more full description of adult education activities at this university, see The Times Educational Supplement, 29 May, 1964.

[113] Taking Eyre Peninsula as an example, the strong interest of women in domestic crafts which had been for years fostered by the C.W.A. was reflected in the activities offered by the Adult Education Centre at Port Lincoln in 1967. The only other offering of note was typewriting in four different country settlements. Rural courses were provided by the W.A.B. and Leadership courses either by this organisation or the C.W.A. in conjunction with the University of Adelaide. Some "cultural-academic" activities had also been arranged by the Department of Adult Education, The University of Adelaide. These included weekend schools in drama, painting, current affairs, and music, and a single weekend seminar on "Race and Race Relations". Some of these topics, together with a course on child welfare, had been the subject of study by local discussion groups. A few State schools had arranged lectures for parents on the new method of teaching mathematics and on decimal currency.

[114] Quoted in Warburton, J.W. (ed), Handbook of Australian Adult Education, (Australian Association of Adult Education), p. 10.

The activities listed for the future by the women in Eyre Peninsula tended to underline this point, although almost without exception, the actual subjects mentioned were those with which they were already acquainted.[115] This finding confirms the view that some initiation is necessary before an interest in a new subject can be aroused. In isolated rural areas, this is of special relevance, since there are few outside cultural and intellectual stimuli to provide such initiation. It seems to constitute a case for the introduction, through adult education in particular, of *new* subjects to fulfil the latent needs of country-folk referred to previously.

In adult education in Australia, however, a great hiatus results from a dearth of interest of school authorities in country areas. There are few dual-purpose buildings acting as schools and adult education centres, and there is an insufficient number of technical colleges (because they are considered as "inessential") to supply evening classes in vocational, fine arts and handicraft subjects. It often appears that the city-based agencies, which were copied from those formed in the conurbations of Britain and which still remain predominantly British in conception, application and spirit, ignore the enormous country hinterlands. Most merely establish a few regional directors in the big towns and issue discussion and correspondence courses which appeal only to a well-educated minority. Some Australian adult educators could be fairly accused of turning their backs, at least in the past, on the different rural areas in favour of the quick results and easy administration of the cities.[116] This represents one of the aspects of the

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115 Percentages of those attending activities in the categories listed, with percentages of those who *wish* to attend in parenthesis, were craftwork-hobbies 22 (21); rural 6 (3); vocational 8 (8); leadership 2 (0); cultural-academic 23 (26); none 39 (42).

116 See The Times Educational Supplement, 29 May, 1964.

general process in Australia of centralisation, which works in most cases to the detriment and further enfeeblement of country districts.

There is, however, a general shortage of financial resources and, especially in the more remote rural districts, of experienced adult tutors who have an understanding of adult education methods and the needs of adults. The continual shunting of teachers as they ascend the bureaucratic educational ladder has already been mentioned. Not only do school education programmes suffer in consequence, but also adult education programmes. School teachers who are likely to be employed in rural areas could be given some awareness of adult needs and adult education teaching methods as part of their teacher-training courses. Internal promotion could be used to encourage many who are successful teachers in adult education to stay longer in remote areas, become better acquainted with them and their educational needs, and attempt to penetrate the local communities.

CONTINUING EDUCATION ESSENTIAL

Provision of appropriate education for all does not merely involve school-buildings, school organisations and school teachers. We must also think about trying to remedy the deficiency of badly-educated, badly-motivated and ill-informed parents. In many homes, the educational environment would be vastly improved by enabling both parents to learn more about school know-how and to become more understanding of their child's educational needs. Some programme of continuing education is in fact vital if they are to fulfil their role as enlightened and understanding parents. In Australia, the economic hardships, although they certainly do exist,[117] are not the core of the problem, which lies

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[117] See for example J. Stubbs, The Hidden People (Cheshire-Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1966) and R.F. Henderson et al., People in Poverty: A Melbourne Study, (Melbourne, 1970).

rather in the lack of motivation, in too exclusively vocational aspirations, impoverished ("public") language used in the home, hostility and indifference to all matters cultural, and the lack of educational know-how among *parents*. Hence the need to raise the educational level of parents and encourage their participation in school affairs. This in turn is dependent on the establishment of more adult education classes in remote areas. Women graduates who marry and settle in these areas are not such a "waste" as many imagine. Such mothers' education is of inestimable value to their children.

NON-CITY-BOUND RURAL YOUTH

Another group which could greatly profit from adult education activities is the non-city-bound rural youth who have just left school. The migration of a segment of rural youth to urban areas produces for those remaining in the rural communities both problems and opportunities. These are not merely confined to the vocational sphere of life. The process involves a transfer of leadership to those remaining, who typically have less formal education than those who move to the cities. Raising the level of competence of those who will later assume public responsibility is obviously a desirable aim and one which can be met, at least in part, through continuing education programmes. Unfortunately, however, the rate of participation for this age group tends to be very low indeed, thus making the task of adult education authorities an exceptionally difficult one.[118]

READING OF NEWSPAPERS

Apart from formal education activities, there are two other important aspects which necessarily have to be discussed in relation to education in isolated rural regions. Firstly, the reading habits of the community. Research on

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[118] J.T. Horner and A.B. Knox claim that the rate of participation by this group during the five years after secondary school is less than for any subsequent age group until the age of sixty. See "Encouraging Non-College-Bound Rural Young Adults to Participate in Continuing Education", Adult Leadership. Vol. 14, (December, 1965), pp. 186-8, 206-12.

the characteristics of country newspaper readers and their attitudes towards what they read is unfortunately fragmentary. It would be interesting to know for example the comparisons of local, State and national newspaper distributions and fluctuations between different country districts. These naturally vary according to size, in terms of area and population, and prosperity of the district, and may even vary in proportion to distance from the metropolis. One would expect decreased interest in events in the capital as distance and isolation increased.

A good example of this type of situation is provided by the Border Watch in the South-East of South Australia in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In the eighteen sixties, the paper almost exclusively concentrated on matters of South-Eastern concern. It commenced publication in 1861 and played such an important role in the secession movement of 1861-2 that one suspects its early advocation of separation of the district from South Australia to form a new colony "Princeland"[119] was the chief initiating impetus in its foundation. Its voicing of local wants and needs undoubtedly contributed to the gradual increase in concessions, grants and attention given to the South-East by the government and the capital after 1865.[120]

It was not until after this decade that editorials on events external to the district began to appear. This fairly subtle change mirrored the general outlook within the region. A broadening of vision was occurring both because of more adequate and quicker means of communication

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119 See R. McL. Harris, "The 'Princeland' Secession Movement in Victoria and South Australia, 1861-1867". The Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 17 (1971), pp. 365-376.

120 See R. McL. Harris, op. cit., passim.

(especially after the opening of rail communication with Adelaide in 1887) and because of the tremendous population increase[121] which diversified the outlook of the South-East as a whole.[122]

As a consequence of the increasing integration of the separate portions of the State, city newspapers have vastly enlarged their circulation in country districts at the expense of local ones, which appear to have now returned to almost purely local coverages again. Thus the State or national newspaper and the "local rag" are today complementary, rather than rivals to one another.[123] The role of the local paper still remains a very significant one in that coverage of regional events mirrors and indeed accentuates the personal ingredients which impart cohesiveness and local importance to the rural community it serves.

PUBLIC LIBRARY BORROWING

Apart from the reading of newspapers and periodicals, the reading of books in country homes appears rather a subsidiary activity to the busy outdoor tasks that confront these people. Disproportionately high numbers of younger

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121 From 1861 to 1871, the population of the South-East increased 87%. South Australian Parliamentary Paper, No. 95, 1872.

122 In the early sixties only a few letters appeared in the Border Watch, almost invariably complaining about local conditions, but during the seventies and eighties, regular articles, written by correspondents from most towns in the area, as well as from Western Victoria and Adelaide, began to take a prominent place.

123 In the Eyre Peninsula sample, for instance, Adelaide newspapers (including Sundays) accounted for thirty per cent of the total number of publications received, while local newspapers made up twenty per cent. The only other category of note were the various women's magazines, which accounted for another twenty-five per cent of the total.

and older women for example appeared in the Eyre Peninsula figures of those who borrowed books regularly from libraries, which indicates that those women who are more confined to their homes are the more inclined to utilize such services. These include many mothers with infant children and elderly women over seventy years of age who have probably lost interest in, or who have difficulty in engaging in, activities outside their homes. Of the total sample, one third borrowed books regularly. This number is the more remarkable when library services in country areas are taken into consideration. Their paucity in both number and quality is unlikely to encourage the habit of reading.

Following his study in 1965 of the need for public libraries in South Australia in relation to its population distribution, Buick wrote:

> "There seems to be no limit to the variety of requirements of the individuals who require the information which is necessary for personal fulfilment, for the creative occupation of leisure, for vocational aptitude and advancement, for active citizenship ... and for participation in the growing world society."[124]

Yet the size of any library must depend on the number of people contributing to the common fund. Buick quotes a a number of experts in library administration on the size of a minimum service area. Their assessments vary between 20,000 and half a million people, though they generally agree that with the growing complexity of modern life, the tendency will be towards larger library units. The sparsely populated country communities are therefore

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108 Buick, W.G. "Population and Governmental Studies for the Provision of Public Libraries in South Australia;" Occasional Papers in Librarianship, No. 1 (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1965).

scarcely numerically large enough to support adequate library facilities. While overseas experience would seem to indicate that public libraries should be established and financed by *local* authorities, Australian conditions on the other hand force local library development to fall within the State's function.[125] In Australia those States with the greatest measure of State government participation are noticeably also those with the lowest average population per local government area - Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia.[126] Probably the provision of better library services in isolated districts may therefore best be achieved through a *combination* of local governments to form larger areas with larger populations and greater tax bases. This could then lead to the establishment of a regional library controlled and supported by the State Public Library.

Fine library services established during the nineteenth century[127] in some country regions did not unfortunately last for very long, and the quality of service provided by

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125 Munn, R. and Pitt, E.R., Australian Libraries, A Survey of Conditions and Suggestions for their Improvement (Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, 1935), p. 128.

126 Buick, op. cit., p. 12.

127 Country institutes were begun in the middle of the nineteenth century and were modelled on the British mechanics' institutes. Strangely, the institute which contained the largest library in South Australia outside Adelaide at this time was one situated at Penola in the South East. By 1880, there were approximately 3,500 volumes within the library and most of these were reputed to be of a high class of literature; 1,980 of these books were in circulation; there was an attendance for the year of 3,192 at the reading room (21 per night); there were 82 subscribers; and a cash balance of £179. The Adelaide Observer, 28 August, 1880.

the country institutes rapidly deteriorated in the twentieth century.[128] Grenfell Price commented adversely in 1936 on the institutes, noting that:

> "under existing conditions, the country folk are being taxed for public library services which they cannot utilize."[129]

and Buick's report stated that the country areas of South Australia were worse off thirty years after Grenfell Price's assertion.

The Public Library's postal service, commenced in 1938, has not furnished a satisfactory system of book-lending.[130] This service has helped only the highly motivated reader, for in addition to the small cost and inconvenience involved, the initiative lies entirely with the reader. One has to know the book or category of books one wants, since no library shelves are immediately available from which to select the books at leisure. The wastage of time incurred, especially when books requested are not readily available, is frustrating even to the most avid reader. In country institutes, reference books are invariably outdated; children's books almost non-existent; no trained staff employed; and only non-fiction work of the most popular nature available.[131]

Standards vary considerably among Australian library services, as is evidenced by the poor service given in the more isolated and sparsely populated districts. Expensive

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128 Buick, op. cit.

129 Grenfell Price, A., "Libraries in South Australia" Occasional Papers in Librarianship, No. 10. (Libraries Board of South Australia, 1969).

130 Under this system books, wherever possible, are sent by rail and the reader is required to collect them and meet the cost of returning them not more than one month later to the Public Library in Adelaide.

131 Buick, op. cit., p. 29.

and less popular books, and trained staff who are necessary to serve the more discriminating reader are almost non-existent.[132] Institute libraries, where they exist, are centrally located in the small country towns. Yet in the survey of Eyre Peninsula women, nearly one half lived more than ten miles from a library, while a third lived over fifteen miles away. Despite having fairly widespread reading interests, the women generally had limited personal libraries. Thrillers, mysteries, historical and war books, literature associated with the history and development of Australia, romantic novels and the Bible featured prominently among the books which the country women most enjoyed reading. On the other hand, the books they actually owned were centred around a core of *reference* books; more specifically, encyclopaedias, atlases, farm-management literature, The Bible, and gardening books.

RADIO BEHAVIOUR

Education in isolated rural areas is also closely connected to the radio and television behaviour of residents. Although commercial radio stations operate in Eyre Peninsula, 34% of the sample used only the ABC, 53% listened to a mixture of both commercial and the ABC and only 13% to commercial stations. This is to be compared with the cities of Sydney and Melbourne, where the ABC attracts only 24% of total radio audience, the majority of listeners choosing commercial stations.[133] The discrepancy, however, between the nature of radio listening in rural and urban districts may not be so marked as they appear *prima facie*, since radio behaviour in remote areas is probably not so strongly influenced as in the cities by televion viewing (many areas

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[132] For details, see, for example, the Official Records of the Institutes Association of South Australia, 1969.

[133] Davies and Encel, op. cit., p. 522.

in the country still do not have good television reception). Indications were that the women in the sample made selective use of radio, turned on only those programmes to which they wished to listen and did not use their radios mainly to provide a confused background noise to daily household chores. As far as the nature of programmes is concerned, news, news reviews, school programmes, interviews, discussions, debates and agricultural sessions clearly predominated, while it was surprising to discover that only a comparatively small percentage listened to radio dramas and serials.[134] The evidence seems to suggest, therefore, that the radio remains an important educational influence in the more remote regions of the country.

TELEVISION VIEWING

Although television reception is limited in Eyre Peninsula, almost half the women in the 1967 survey possessed a set, and the overall preference was again for the ABC which generally transmits better quality programmes.[135] It is of course likely that many of the women had not had time to get accustomed to the commercial channel. Yet further indication that many in this country area were interested

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134 Nature of Programmes Listened to on Radio (Eyre Peninsula Survey)

Programmes	No.	%
News and News Reviews	100	24
School Broadcasts	10	2.5
Musical Programmes	110	25.6
Interviews, Discussion, Debates	65	15.6
Plays, Comedies and Serials	44	10.5
"Blue Hills"	27	6.5
Country Hour and Agricultural Sessions	39	9.5
Sports	6	1.5
Women's Programmes	5	1.3
Religious	12	3
Total	418	100%

135 Respective percentages of content of national and commercial television - drama and light entertainment, 41.8 and 74.4; education, 13.8 and 0.5; current affairs, 8.0 and 1.3; the arts, 1.7 and 0.1; information, 3.4 and 1.9; children, 8.7 and 5.7. Davies and Encel, op. cit., p. 533.

in the better quality educational programmes comes from the list of programmes which were unavailable or too rarely presented but which the women wished to view. Documentaries, theatre, instructional and cultural telecasts featured strongly. This was significant especially as the ABC already gives ten per cent of its peak viewing time to documentaries. It appears that, in the eyes of folk from isolated rural districts, television in Australia has not exploited all the opportunities for cultural improvement, and that a considerable proportion of programmes which people enjoy or want more of are of an *educational* character. In a very real sense, these types of programmes for people in distant communities act as a substitute for that which is unavailable to them but which city dwellers can see live if they wish. By viewing as wide a range of telecasts as possible, ranging from world class sport to highbrow drama, they feel that they can compensate to some degree at least for the social, cultural and educational performances and stimuli that they lack in the country.

THE EFFECT OF RISING EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ON RURAL COMMUNITIES.

The considerable numbers of country women who attend adult education activities, borrow books from libraries and institutes, listen to the more informative radio sessions, and view or desire to view a greater number of educational television programmes, indicates that countryfolk in isolated areas are not by any means disinterested in educational matters. On the contrary, many are vitally concerned, despite limited resources and opportunities, with educational and cultural improvement of themselves and their children. There can be no doubt that, although rural society remains essentially conservative and traditional in character and social change therefore occurs at snail pace, the cultural, social and psychological gulf between rural and urban life in the world today is being drastically narrowed. The two life-spheres, previously separated by the wedges of geography and time, have been brought closer together by improved transport and communication. Economically and politically, country and city are rapidly becoming unified. It is argued that this is progress, necessary and indeed inevitable. A case can be put, however, that many worthwhile *values* of rural life are being eroded or at least polluted in the **inexora**ble process of suburbanisation of the countryside.

While technology can be regarded as the first lever contributing to the gradual lessening of the gap between town and country, the second lever acting in the same direction is that of education. The latter is more subtle

but potentially just as effective in altering the tone and texture of rural existence. How is this achieved? What effect does education have on the attitudes, aspirations and activities of countryfolk in isolated areas, in particular the women whose level of formal education tends to be somewhat higher as compared with their husbands? So far several variations according to different age categories have been discussed but probably the most important finding which emerges from our Eyre Peninsula study is the variation of country people's attitudes and activities with educational achievement.

ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITY

In organisational activity, the level of education reached affects the power structure, nature of organisation joined and reasons for membership. It appears that in the hierarchy of factors determining election to responsible offices in country organisations, education weighs more heavily than age or length of residence in the community. Those with a limited education are generally the older women who have lived in their district longer than their younger, better-educated neighbours. Yet it is these latter who occupy the highest and most responsible positions, and when such positions *are* filled by women with primary education only, they are almost exclusively restricted to the two major rural organisations.[136] Those women with tertiary education, on the other hand, hold responsible offices in a much wider range of organisations than other women.

This predominance of the more highly educated in responsible positions is important in view of the relatively

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136 Thirty-three per cent of those with tertiary education in the Eyre Peninsula sample, compared with twenty-one per cent of those with primary or secondary education, had held decision-making positions which included president, vice-president or captain. Other offices, such as secretary, treasurer and responsible positions in sub-committees, if at all held by women with primary education only, were confined to the CWA and the WAB, and were usually of a subordinate nature, e.g. CWA handicraft secretary.

large number of members with only very moderate educational qualifications (only 23 women of a primary school background had held decision-making positions despite the fact that this education group was composed mainly of older women who had lived in their districts longer than their younger and better educated neighbours). Moreover, it was noticeable in the Eyre Peninsula sample that the women with tertiary or higher secondary education are turning from home science subjects to drama, music, painting and other cultural interests; that is, they are attracted to those organisations and activities which are of a more individual and unusual nature and have clearer educational objectives. Reasons for membership also vary according to level of formal education. Interest in the domestic crafts and reasons given by the many women with limited education for joining organisations with these activities indicates a basic need for companionship. In contrast, the better educated women had interests which reflected a greater concern for community service and a more specific wish to understand aspects of their environment.

ADULT EDUCATION

Similar noteworthy variations emerge from enrolment figures for adult education activities. Of the women who had been educated to the primary level only, sixty-seven per cent took no part in adult education. It is interesting to observe that these are usually the same women who have very limited or no organisational membership. Likewise, of the forty-one per cent of women with secondary education and no adult education participation, the majority were those who achieved no successes in external examinations. Only nine per cent of women with tertiary education took no part in adult education. Of special interest and importance are the figures for those participating in the wide range of cultural and academic activities, for they show a

marked rise as level of educational achievement increases.[137] Craftwork and hobbies on the other hand represented the bulk of the adult education interest of those with primary and secondary school education.[138]

Confirmation of these trends comes from investigation of the nature of the activities the women *wished* to study according to their educational background. The more highly educated wished to study more academic-cultural activities, while craftwork-hobbies again accounted for most of the interests of those with limited education.[139] Thus the actual subjects mentioned by the women were those with which they were already acquainted. In addition, the percentages of those *not* wishing to study any adult education activity in the future decreased markedly as level of educational achievement increased.[140] It cannot of course be assumed that answers given indicated a firm intention on the part of respondents to join future activities that might be arranged. The conclusion, however, is that few of those who gave a negative response are likely ever to be attracted to adult education programmes. It is the more highly educated people in the country community who are the keenest in attending and wanting to study more adult education activities in the future, in particular, *academic-cultural* activities. With increasing educational provision in the country and rising school-leaving age, it seems likely that

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137 Primary education group 6%; Secondary education group 11%; Tertiary education group, 53%.

138 Of those who participated in adult education: 50% (primary education group) and 61% (secondary education group). Compare with the tertiary education group, 17%.

139 Percentages of those wishing to study more activities: academic-cultural 11% (primary), 33% (secondary), 64% (tertiary); craftwork-hobbies, 71% (primary), 50% (secondary); 15% (tertiary.)

140 Sixty-seven per cent (primary education group); 46% (secondary); 14% (tertiary).

these types of educational activities will be in increasing demand. This trend will undoubtedly sharpen the intellectual awareness and knowledge of rural communities, thereby, it is hoped, mitigating traces of anti-intellectualism which in the past have played a negative role in the education of rural children.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

In the sphere of politics, Oeser and Emery from their study in the Mallee region in 1954 concluded that "a widespread apathy, rooted in a basic political conservatism common to all sections of the community, and the existence of social pressures against any deviation from the politics of the leading farming group are the characteristic features of the present life of the community."[141] Traditional features of isolated rural areas have been the lack of interest generally, and the non-participation on the part of women in politics. Yet there are indications that this situation is beginning to change. By September 1969, for example, there were twenty-three women in local government in South Australia compared with only nine five years earlier. In the South-East, Millicent recently appointed the first woman to be mayor of a district council. The increase in female representation has been attributed to the activity of the women in the Local Government Association.[142] It may be that this activity in turn stems from the increase in organisational membership, the changing nature of organisational activities and the rise in the general level of education. Older women with limited education form the greater majority of those who do not wish to see more women elected to government arenas, while it is

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141 op. cit., p. 33

142 Official Records of the Local Government Department of South Australia, 1964 and 1969.

mainly the more highly educated who wish to be elected themselves.[143]

READING HABITS

Educational background also results in marked variations in the number and quality of reading material of country folk. The more highly educated subscribe to far more newspapers and periodicals.[144] A common reading pattern for those of limited formal education consists of a daily and a Sunday Local newspaper, rural or church journal, woman's magazines or poor quality periodical. In contrast, the better quality American, English and Australian publications and the professional journals were mentioned almost exclusively in the answers of those women with a higher education. Those who borrowed books regularly from libraries and institutes included 62% with secondary, compared with 29% with primary school education. Many of the latter category were elderly women. It has already been mentioned that women with primary education join a limited number of organisations to seek companionship. It would seem that while they are physically able, the majority seek such activities outside the home but read more in their

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[143] In the Eyre Peninsula sample, 8.5% of women were willing to stand for office which, in the face of strong conservative influences in rural societies, is an encouraging sign that women in the Peninsula are beginning to show an *active* interest in government. Less than four per cent of those with primary, eleven per cent of those with secondary and sixteen per cent of those with tertiary education were willing to stand.

[144] Subscribers to four or more newspapers-periodicals: 80% of tertiary education group, 60% of primary and secondary education groups. Several of the tertiary education group and of those with examination achievements at secondary level subscribed to more than ten newspapers-periodicals.

later years. The very small proportion of borrowers with tertiary education is rather suprising. This may be a reflection of the poor quality of library services and the books available in remote country districts. Since they subscribed to a large number of quality newspapers-periodicals, their reading matter was probably comprised mainly of these, in addition to books purchased or borrowed over long periods of time.

TELEVISION BEHAVIOUR

One would expect, from the amount of publicity which it received in recent years, that there would be some correlation between the degree and quality of television viewing and educational achievement.[145] The evidence supporting such correlations, however, varies immensely according to geographical and temporal limits. In the Eyre Peninsula sample, only small variations were revealed in the number of hours per day viewing according to educational level attained. Generally, the tendency was for the more highly educated women to watch television for less time than others. Higher correlations were obtained between quality of programme and level of education - 41% of the primary education group, compared with 70% of the secondary and 100% of the tertiary education groups - viewed "better quality" or "mixed quality" programmes.[146]

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[145] For example, H.L. Wilensky, "High Culture and Mass Culture", New Society, 14 May, 1964. He showed that even the highly educated participated fully in mass culture in the U.S.A., though there were significant variations in the nature of programmes viewed at the top of the graduate scale (especially lawyers and professors).

[146] "Better quality" programmes included documentaries, news broadcasts, discussions, opera, drama, current events, education, travelogues, "Four Corners", "Tonight", "Spectrum", "Project 67". "Poorer Quality" ones included quizzes, panel games, serials, "Sound of Music", "Country and Western Hour". "Mixed quality" category was used when no clear emphasis was apparent on the kind of programmes viewed regularly or no clear indication was given of the quality of programmes mentioned.

VISITS TO THE CAPITAL

Finally, more highly educated rural folk visit the State capital more frequently than the less educated.[147] It would appear that, as most of those with tertiary qualifications are also the younger, rural residents are becoming less content to live in isolation and more appreciative and dependent upon resources outside their own small community. The more highly educated also generally have a different motive for journeying to Adelaide, since they make the visit to take advantage of *cultural* services not available or in short supply in their local districts. The less educated on the other hand visit Adelaide more for recreational, personal or business reasons.[148]

If rural people are becoming less content to live in isolation, what advantages do they think Adelaide residents have? In a very general attempt to gauge satisfaction of country women with the facilities available to them, it appears that the better educated (50%) rather than those with primary education only (13%) consider Adelaide residents enjoy more cultural services than country people. The stress on recreational benefits, and others such as water, electricity, fresh bread, better transport and good television reception, is greatest in the primary (58%) and least in the tertiary (22%) education group. In other words, the higher the level of education of the individual the more she journeys to the capital to

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147 Percentages of women in the Eyre Peninsula sample who visit Adelaide two or more times per year: 75% (tertiary education group); 60% (secondary education group); and 38% (primary education group).

148 Cultural reasons: 60% (tertiary education group); 26% (secondary); and 13% (primary). Recreational, personal business reasons: 41% (tertiary); 74% (secondary); and 87% (primary).

enjoy the cultural and educational facilities available there. The less educated women seem to be the most satisfied with their rural existence.[149] A clear pattern in this aspect emerges in the behaviour and attitudes of country women according to their educational background. For the older women with limited education only, an Adelaide visit appears to be a traditional annual holiday spread over several days and comprising shopping outings and appointments with medical practitioners, eye specialists and dentists. The majority of the younger and more highly educated women journey to the capital more frequently and crowd many and varied activities into their shorter visits.

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[149] Percentages of those who do not think Adelaide residents enjoy any benefits not available to themselves: 30% (primary); 14% (secondary); and 3% (tertiary). L.F. Easterbrook claimed in 1928 that 80% of writers in a children's essay contest in England indicated preference for a town rather than a country career. It is clear that those children who entered would have been the more academically intelligent, and only a percentage of these expressed their preference. However, it indicates again that it is the more academically inclined who are dissatisfied with rural opportunities and who will tend to transfer to the cities. See Nineteenth Century, July, 1928.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL SOCIETY.

Important variations in the attitudes, aspirations, and activities of country people are in evidence when different educational levels are examined. What implications have these variations for rural society as a whole?

EDUCATIONAL DEMARCATION LINE

Perhaps the most important point is that the gulf separating the more educated from the less educated in rural areas appears to be growing wider. Membership in more cultural and educational organisations, dominance in decision-making roles of importance, keener interest in community affairs, more judicious use of television and radio, the reading of better quality newspapers, periodicals and books are characteristics found mainly among those who have received a formal education beyond junior secondary level. In adult education and other cultural activities that are not limited to education for full-time employment, women participate enthusiastically and to a greater degree than their husbands. But these women are in general the more highly educated. The woman with limited education tends to remain unaware of social issues and to take little part in community activities. Her interests are usually confined to her home and family and she leads a life of narrow domesticity.

Yet the role of the educated woman in this male-dominated community remains a paradoxical one. She is in many instances better educated than her husband who may not understand or be in sympathy with her interests and activities external to the home. At the same time she is still not accepted as an equal and only rarely finds her way into top decision-

making circles at work and in *mixed* community organisations. To a certain extent also it is her own failing in that she has not yet freed herself from the sense of female inferiority, and this may be a major reason for the limited participation of many rural women in socially beneficial action as well as their reluctance to use some of the services that rural society offers.

INCREASING DISSATISFACTION

That the less educated woman appeared to be the most satisfied, and conversely, the more highly educated woman the least satisfied with her rural existence in isolation, has important implications for the future of these communities. With the gradual diminution of the inequalities in the education of rural children, and the increasing provision of educational facilities in country districts, we can expect rising numbers of rural folk to become dissatisfied with the *status quo*.

It would be interesting to know how many children from isolated country areas who transfer to the cities to further their formal education actually return to rural life. Our observation of many country graduates who have studied for the Diploma in Education at the University of Adelaide is that very few do go back or have any wish to go back. If this observation is the correct one, such drainage would tend to deprive rural communities of their most academically able young people, especially in view of the lack of cultural facilities and opportunities for appropriate employment. It thus appears that the worm of isolation is slowly but surely eating away the bases upon which not only an educated but also a contented rural community can be built. The situation where many of the community's prospective or potential leaders are being sifted away and re-oriented to urban ways through the educational sieve poses a real threat to the future of rural life.

NEW ASPIRATIONS, NEW PROBLEMS

Indeed, it is clear that already the *modus vivendi* in rural areas is gradually changing, and that these changes are bringing with them new aspirations which in turn are creating new problems. The directions in which change is taking place are becoming apparent and are beginning to disturb the social roles and expectations of country people. Despite family and home commitments and possible unfavourable community attitudes, many women, for example, are becoming involved in a very wide range of leisure activities which, with elevation in the general educational level, are increasingly cultural and academic. Some of these activities in organisations of adult education, and particularly those relating to community service, appeared to reflect what the individuals believed they should be interested in, and in this sense, rural values and attitudes may be in the process of metamorphosis. For the farm child, the most fundamental orientation towards the family has tended in the past to be functional in that, along with ready acceptance and participation in everyday farm life, a realistic goal was posited to which he could eagerly aspire. Farming was an occupation with which the child could willingly identify. Economic trends, however, are causing this previously functional orientation to become increasing - and alarmingly - dysfunctional. This gradually widening gap could have serious repercussions not only for each individual farm child but for rural society in general, *unless* the aspirations of rural children can be harnessed and redirected on a path more in consonance with economic reality.

In this context it is significant that occupations listed for rural children show a trend away from farming

to a wider spectrum of jobs.[150] One factor accounting for this movement is that for the rural child there is decreasing opportunity on the land.[151] Mechanization of farm work, resultant increasing costs for the man on the land, over-supplied markets, protection by overseas countries of their primary industries all contribute towards problematical returns and ever greater difficulties for the producers. On the positive side of the picture, this trend also reflects the rapidly increasing opportunities for education in isolated country areas. Yet these two factors provide only half the answer. The deeper, more subtle explanation lies in the changing attitude in rural districts towards the *importance of education*, partly resulting from the natural influence mothers have in the upbringing of their children. As the inhabitants in isolated communities experience better education, improved communications and greater mobility, their aspirations are being elevated not only for themselves and their children, but also for the whole community in which they live.

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[150] See tables on p. 40. E.A. Wilson found that in America also, the percentage of farm children entering non-farming occupations increased directly with the amount of education they received. "Education and Occupation of Farm-Reared Children", Quarterly Journal of University of North Dakota, July, 1928.

[151] The city child may also be affected. The severe drop in enrolments at Urrbrae Agricultural High School in 1971 was mainly accounted for by a decline in the number of metropolitan students, who were realizing that openings in agriculture were becoming increasingly scarce. The principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College, however, claimed that failure to increase enrolments was directly attributable to a fall-off in interest by farmers' sons. Sunday Mail, 14 November, 1971.